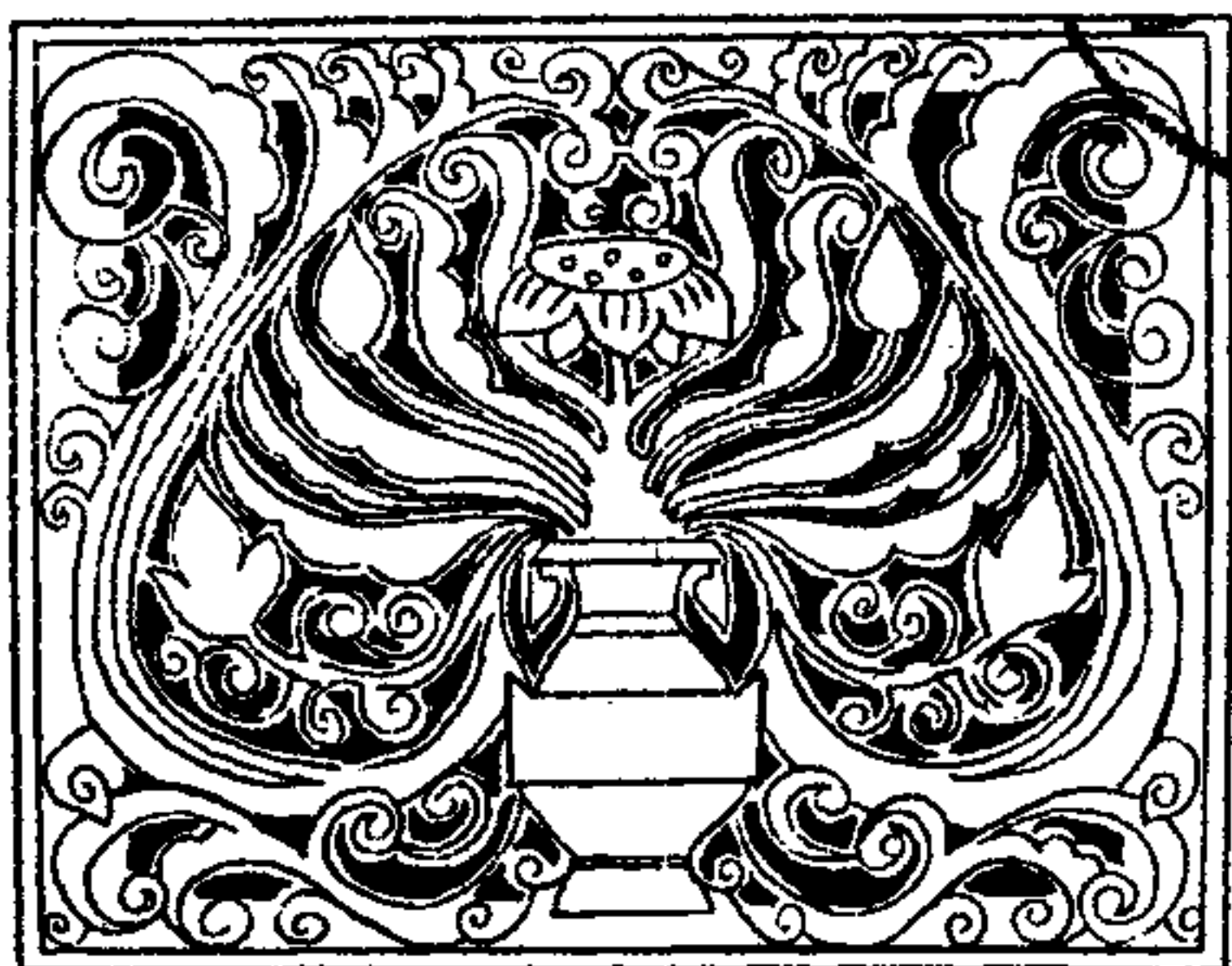




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उत्तिष्ठत
जाग्रत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

Vol. 103

JULY 1998

No. 7

Divine Wisdom

(DHURUVA'S DISCOMFITURE AT THE HANDS OF SURUCHI)

अथातः कीर्तये वंशं पुण्यकीर्तेः कुरुद्वह।
स्वायंभुवस्यापि मनोहरिरंशांशजन्मनः॥

जाये उत्तानपादस्य सुनीतिः सुरुचिस्तयोः।
सुरुचिः प्रेयसी पत्युर्नेतरा यत्सुतो ध्रुवः॥

O son of the Kuru clan! I shall next describe the extremely holy line of Swāyambhuva Manu of extensive fame, who was himself a portion of a part of the Lord (i.e., a son of Brahma, who is a part of the Lord).

Of these, Uttānapāda had two wives, Suniti and Suruchi by name, of whom the latter was very dear to the king, while the former, the mother of Dhruva, was not so dear.

प्रियव्रतोत्तानपादौ शतरूपापतेः सुतौ।
वासुदेवस्य कलया रक्षायां जगतः स्थितौ॥

एकदा सुरुचेः पुत्रमङ्गमारोप्य लालयन्।
उत्तमं नारुरुक्षन्तं ध्रुवं राजाभ्यनन्दत॥

Priyavrata and Uttānapāda, the two sons of Swāyambhuva by his wife Satarupa, were endowed with a part of the Lord Himself, and they engaged themselves in governing the world.

One day King Uttānapāda was fondling Uttama, his son by Suruchi, holding him on his lap, when Dhruva, the son of Suniti, also came forward to be fondled. The king did not, however, encourage him for fear of Suruchi.

Fixing the Mind on God-VI

How long does one ordinarily engage oneself in spiritual practices? On an average, maybe one hour in the morning and another in the evening. Many exert far less and a few rare souls strive for a longer time. But even those who spend two hours in twenty-four for spiritual practices do not have much punch in their effort to dive deep within. Often they float on the surface. Assuming that the gracious God will be satisfied with just that intensity of spiritual practice, it merely amounts to less than nine per cent of the day! If you are asked to strive with as much earnestness as would make one eligible to obtain pass marks (thirty per cent), there would be much protest, for that means, one has to devote over seven *long* hours! And *that* is not feasible, you would say, for there are plenty of worldly engagements to attend to: there is the work in the office, in the kitchen, and so on. Let us not forget then that to the extent we live without establishing a contact with the divine, to that extent we are not spiritual; we are secular. That is a blunt truth. This cognizance may make one yield a little, to look out for ways by which one may even in the midst of 'hectic' work keep in touch with the divine. Sri Krishna, Himself a king, we must not fail to observe, taught the Gita in the midst of a battlefield — not in the seclusion of a monastery — to yet another valorous soul belonging to the ruling class. Uneasy rests the head that wears a crown, it is said, but even the monarch found time for contemplation and spiritual life.

The problem with some is that while trying to meditate, they enter the sleep state. For them meditation often amounts to a lengthy duration of uncomfortable yet undisturbed sleep. They quickly learn how to

sprinkle water over their face and start again with renewed determination, or to take the name of God while strolling to and fro; some have developed a peculiar technique of body movement suggested to be an effective antidote [see News & Reports, *Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1998, p. 414]. To quite a few others, works they are engaged in usually disturb them in their meditation. Important and unfinished works find a place during one's meditation. Then there are those who find that their strong ego has been hurt by someone or by some occurrence, and these thoughts take away much of their time. One can spend whole hours on the *asana* venting out one's anger! Thus, all in all, one does not effectively spend one's time even while seated in the *asana* with the intention of meditation. None of us is Buddha-like in resolve, and many cannot sit at real meditation at the proper times, it must be admitted.

One can effectively push away undesired thoughts which disturb the mind in meditation in many ways. Meditation becomes as uninteresting as writing an article because it is often a one-way process; we seem to be addressing someone who does not respond. We mechanically go through some set procedures during our spiritual practices without participating in it actively with love and interest. How long can one expect one's mind to persist in such a dull effort? There must be a sincere longing for leaving behind the world and its concerns, for diving deep, for visualizing God, a conscious and determined effort in this direction, and an opening of one's heart in a fervent prayer. One must have some imagination. One enjoys hours of gossip; one perhaps might equally enjoy hours of gossip with the Divine within. Our effort should

not be machine-like, forced under regimentation as it were.

A hurt ego is quite difficult to handle. Perhaps, there are various techniques and some of these are effective for some. One fact to recognize is that so long as the ego remains, God-vision is an impossibility; so one ought to be grateful to those who hurt it. It definitely tells us we have yet a long distance to travel. The other man and his actions work like a detergent; they are, be thankful to them, intent on cleansing you free of your ego. Another method may be to understand at least intellectually and emotionally that everything happens by the will of God, that without the power of the Divine functioning through the other person, he could not have acted the way he did. Therefore, even in the middle of getting hurt, you can try to look at the other man with a curious inward smile telling yourself how very wonderful it is that it is the same divine energy that functions in him as in you, and that it is indeed great fun to see him acting so through the five sheaths in which the Divine is encased. The idea is to emphasize the Atman in the other man and not the outward expression coloured by the other man's body-mind complex, which is hurtful. This may attune you to the Atman within you and make you inward. Yet the hurt ego does surface once in a while for some days; for some fortunate ones, it endures for lesser time. But as long as the ego hurts, enjoy its being crushed for *you* have chosen to tread the spiritual path!

Works disturb us, no doubt. One method to handle this situation is to tell the mind that you will attend to that 'important' work once you have finished your meditation. Another method is to write down the disturbing work idea in a diary and to tell the mind that as it has been noted, it will be attended to later. But then one should not settle down to maintaining a diary in the name of meditation. Sometimes it is the wandering mind, an aimless movement.

This sort of mental functioning often comes under control through watching; it is just as a child's being mischievous to attract its mother's attention, the child becoming quiet when it sees that its mother is simply looking at its pranks. Sometimes the mind can be effectively brought under control by explaining to it when it is receptive to such counsel.

We may also take recourse to using a buffer. This concept finds wide application in engineering. We had earlier mentioned how effective it is to look at the picture of a divine Incarnation of God before sitting for meditation. Before going into meditation one could also fill the mind with lofty thoughts such as are conducive to one's mode of spiritual practice. Reading of devotional books may help some; reading of Vedantic texts may help others; the inspiring lives of saints benefit most. The greater the buffer, the lesser is the chance for alien thoughts to interfere with us in our meditation. Our determination will also be enhanced if we read inspiring books such as those which speak of the determination of a Buddha or the struggles of saints who earlier in their lives were very ordinary. Reading books *after* the spiritual practice is also a good idea. This helps to preserve the spiritual mood for a longer time. Why is it that we, who took our seats for the sole purpose of meditation, get up from that seat? Usually it is the thought of some pending important work, or the deeply felt need to convey some important message to someone. It is, in one form or the other, the restlessness of the mind. This disturbing urge becomes so strong that it easily overrides our feeble desire to plunge in whole-souled adoration of the Lord. It is therefore better to read some books after meditation and gradually prepare ourselves to engage in outward activities. The mind which we have so long striven to draw inward must be gradually allowed to go out into the many pressing tasks before us. The preservation of the spiritual mood

after the morning and evening practices will influence us during the day and the night respectively.

In conjunction with this, it is also preferable to see if there is any way by which we can make our secular moments sacred. 'No distinction between secular and sacred' is an ideal. But how to realize that ideal in actual life? Before we discuss this aspect, let us ask another question: what happens if we lead two lives, one secular and the other sacred?

Consider a devotee of God visiting a place of pilgrimage. Imagine that we remove all the temples from that place of pilgrimage. Let us also suppose that there are no holy personages whom the devotee can meet, pay obeisance, talk to, and seek counsel from. But instead of it, we have only buildings upon buildings, with offices, papers, files and file cabinets, telephones, fax machines, xerox machines, computers, That, any devotee will agree, sounds like the very description of hell. And that exactly is what we find ourselves to be in the midst of, when we leave places of worship and go to our work-sites. It is so when we travel by different modes of conveyance, in the marketplace, in the railway ticket counters, and sadly, even in many homes. Many find in their homes a miniature world. And they do have a small shrine, the parallel of a temple or a place of pilgrimage, which they resort to when life becomes very taxing. There is however no filter which shuts away the uncomfortable world when we visit holy places or our household shrine. These worldly disturbances find opportunities to make their presence felt in our minds. Even such a noble soul as the Rani Rasmani found herself in the octopus-grip of the legal suit which troubled her when she was at the temple of Bhavatarini Kali, the awakened Goddess of Dakshineswar, in the presence of no less a personality than the divinely inspired Incarnation of the age, Sri Ramakrishna. So, it is not possible to fight this fact or flee away from it, but we can certainly try

our best to make the secular moments sacred. If the world can disturb us during our meditation, why cannot we take God to the work-site? What great changes would this bring to us and to others around us at the work-site because of our changed perception!

And now the how. Fortunately for us there are many illustrations of great personages who have in their own lives done just that. We shall take for consideration obviously mundane activities like giving a lecture, taking a class, or maybe even writing an article. Let us first consider the case of Swami Trigunatitananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. What was his attitude? In *Sri Ramakrishna-Bhaktamālikā*, we find a passage to the following effect:

Whether it be the construction of the Hindu Temple or conducting the affairs of the Shanti Ashrama, Swami Trigunatitananda was always engrossed in divine consciousness. Whatever he did was to please the Master. There was no personal consideration. In his scheme of training some of his disciples as future preachers of religion, the method he laid down before them for such preaching activity revealed also his own method of performing every work. *His conception was that delivering lectures and holding classes, as also every other work, were only means to translate the ideal of Vedanta into our lives.* Through the lectures etc., the speaker was to serve the listeners and there should not be the least trace of egotism in the speaker. The speaker would have to open himself totally to the Divine and learn as gift from Him the subject matter of each day's speech. The method for doing this is prayer and self-surrender. *Preparing lectures from books and notes occupies a very low place only.* Being straightforward, with a mind devoid of mentation, and maintaining equanimity in the matter of success or failure of the enterprise, one has to be in quest of Truth; then only the correct perception of Truth will shine in the mind-stuff. After meditating in this fashion for half an hour, the information received from meditation should be offered at the lotus feet of the Lord and received from Him once

again by beseeching it as His blessing. In determining the topic as well as in receiving light on the topic of discussion, this method was to be followed. Standing on the dais, one should think that the lecture is being delivered to God Himself. This constitutes, in this instance, the application of the 'Practical Vedanta' of Swamiji. Swami Trigunatitananda would often say, 'the distracted mind can never reach the goal', 'be ever vigilant to see God all around you; look upon all objects as soaked in the essence of God; then only your mind will think of Him alone.'¹

We read in the life of Swami Ramakrishnananda, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, that while he was in Madras, he would go to different places for holding classes on Vedanta and the Indian scriptures. Not on all days were these lectures well attended. In some, there were none to listen. But the Swami would spend the allotted duration in discussing the topic before an empty hall: 'I have not come here to teach others. This work is like a vow to me, and I am fulfilling it irrespective of whether anyone comes or does not come.'² He too held that he was holding the class to please the all-pervading Divine and was merely acting as an instrument in the hands of God. He would, when he had very little energy left after a strenuous lecture engagement, say, 'Suppose a pen were conscious; it could say, "I have written hundreds of letters", but actually it has done nothing, for the one who holds it has written the letters. So, because we are conscious, we think we are doing all these things, whereas in reality we are as

much instrument in the hands of a Higher Power as the pen in our hands, and He makes all things possible.'³ There was no seeking for applause, no looking into the collection box. From delivering such lectures the Swami would derive immense joy, for was he not serving God? Just as God resides in each among the audience, even so He resides in the speaker. And it was to that God within and around that the Swami was talking the scriptural truths which He Himself had revealed to mankind in some earlier age or in the present age. Unaccustomed to this method of preaching, purely looking upon oneself as a tool in the hands of God, unaccustomed also to commune with God to know what He wished to get expressed, speakers look forward to being applauded, to hearing some words of praise, or having their talk summarized and reproduced in full in the printed columns of a journal or a newspaper. This latter method is ego-based and is bound to lead the speaker to misery on the one hand, and take him away from being attuned to God on the other. It could be that some appreciate your talk and they become your favourites; some others may criticize what you say and they are disliked. Let us turn to Swami Vivekananda and see how he reacted to such situations!

In the evening, sitting around the great fire in the hall of Ridgely Manor, he would talk, and once after he came out with some thoughts a lady said, 'Swami, I don't agree with you there.' 'No? Then it is not for you,' he answered. Someone else said, 'O, but that is where I find you true.' 'Ah, then it was for you,' he said showing utter respect for the other man's views.⁴

Swami Vivekananda spoke not to any particular individual or a group of people in the sense he did not have to measure his auditors. He spoke as the dictate came from within. The audience also attended his sit-

1. Cf. *Sri Ramakrishna-Bhaktamalika* (Calcutta: Udbodhan, B.S. 1386), (Bengali) vol. 2, p. 27. [Hereafter, *Bhaktamalika*.] For a different version, see *Prabuddha Bharata*, 1928, pp. 355-6, which, in a condensed form, is presented by Swami Chetanananda in *God Lived with Them* (St. Louis: Vedanta Society of St. Louis, 1997), pp. 509-10.

2. *The Apostles of Sri Ramakrishna* (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1972), p. 240.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

4. *Reminiscences of Vivekananda* (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1964), p. 244.

tings being urged to do so by the divine promptings from within them. Those among the listeners received parts of his message which were meant for them; they could not see meaning in the rest of the message.

In the case of Swamiji, this process of tapping the Source of all knowledge was instantaneous almost, and he could come up with what may be termed a 'well-prepared speech' given only a moment's notice, as it so happened before the Sesame Club.⁵

Swami Vivekananda spoke always from an indrawn mood. He was always attuned to the Source of his message. The classes were really his Master's. Aptly therefore, he was a voice without a form. It was some time after the Swami came to Ridgely Manor. There was a proposal that the Swami would be leaving. A student sad at heart said, 'But Swamiji, you can't go. The classes are going on!' The Swami turned with dignity and answered, 'Are they my classes? Yes, I will go.' And he did, because he acted on the divine call. The *Reminiscences* mention as a sequel of this an eye-opening incident revealing his indrawn nature:⁶

While he [Swamiji] was there, he met my [Josephine MacLeod's] sister's children who were then twelve and fourteen years old. But when we came down to New York and the classes began again, he did not seem to remember them, and they, very much surprised, said, 'Swami doesn't remember us.' We said to them, 'Wait until the class is over.' While he was lecturing, he was always completely absorbed in what he was talking about. When he was through speaking, he came up and said, 'Well children, how nice to see you again,' showing he did remember them. They were very happy.

The life of Swami Turiyananda, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, is also a glowing example. For every question

from a sincere questioner, the Swami always had the most suitably reply! When sitting together, walking or taking food, the stream of spiritual discussion flowed on without interruption. Once he was questioned 'how it was possible always to speak of holy subjects? Are you never getting exhausted?' The Swami said that he had *lived* the life from his youth and so it had become part and parcel of his life. 'And Mother keeps the supply filled up. Her store can never be exhausted. What goes out, She at once fills up again.'⁷ He had a strange behaviour while talking with a person. Softly chanting in between, he would sometimes look remote as if he were only half listening, as if his mind were elsewhere. This was puzzling and misleading, especially when the Swami was slow in answering a question. Was it that he was not interested in the subject of the conversation, or was it he did not like to be drawn outward? Neither was the actual explanation, for he never lost the drift of the conversation and his answers were always to the point. Questioned regarding this the Swami clarified with a very meaningful observation — 'There are two ways of answering a question: one way is to answer from the intellect, the other way is to answer from *within*. I always try to answer from within.'⁸ The 'within' has the answer to all the questions. It is the source of all knowledge. From it man derives all inspiration, strength and guidance for all works, and this is an unending spring of spiritual illumination! This inspiration always meets the needs of the questioner.⁹ The answer from the intellect sometimes may not satisfy any among the hear-

7. Swami Atulananda, *With the Swamis in America and India* (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1988), p. 45. See also Swami Ritajananda, *Swami Turiyananda* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1973), p. 48.

8. *With the Swamis in America and India*, p. 42. See also *Bhaktamalika*, vol. 1, pp. 479–80.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 300–2.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 234–5.

ers! The answer from within may sound too poorly phrased but then, there is something in it for each among the audience, and the hearer for whom a particular answer is addressed is immensely satisfied. In this it is the divine in the heart who speaks to the divine in the listener. The divine surge knows neither time nor place for its bursting forth! To Gurudasa (later Swami Atulananda) Swami Turiyananda once said speaking more loudly as his pace of walking increased, 'Be a lion! Be a lion! Break the cage and be free! Take one big jump and the work is done!' And this utterance on the street in one of the most fashionable avenues of New York attracted the attention of the passers-by.¹⁰ What was the result of living such a life centred in God? Swami Turiyananda realized ere long that every step of his was taken under the dictate of the Divine Mother.

Sri Ramakrishna would say that his Divine Mother supplied all the answers; he himself knew nothing. He gave the example of two men engaged in measuring the amount of rice. Even as a heap of rice is measured, it is replenished by the other man. So, here too, the supply is without disruption and it also suits the need of the hearer. On one occasion¹¹, Upendra Nath Ghosh, a sub-judge and a friend of Atulchandra Ghosh (brother of Girishchandra Ghosh), accompanied Atulchandra Ghosh to meet Sri Ramakrishna, who was then seriously ill at Shyampukur. Unfortunately, 'various kinds of useless talks were going on — talks on painting, on melting gold in the goldsmith's shop, and so on'. Atulchandra was thinking within himself that he had brought his friend, a new-comer, to meet Sri Ramakrishna, and by the Master's talking on useless topics, his friend was bound to form a very poor opinion of the Master. That

was a very uncomfortable thought for Atulchandra. But, looking at his friend, Atulchandra was surprised to observe that his friend was immensely enjoying the conversation. His friend was so happy with the talk that he refused to leave when Atulchandra asked him by a sign whether he would. Repeated hints of this type could not drag Upendra from the intoxicating talk which he was imbibing attentively as a bee sucking honey from a flower! While on this occasion what captured Upendra was the Master's universal love and his making merry on trifling topics, his next meeting was even more impressive. This time Atulchandra had advised Upendra to put his questions to the Master when alone, so he may get the answer that would resolve his doubt to his entire satisfaction. Being bashful, Upendra put the question through another. The answers which the Master gave were obviously not to the satisfaction of Upendra. Disappointed, Upendra himself put one of his other questions, 'has God forms or has He not' directly to the Master. Giving the example of ice and water, the Master answered the question to Upendra's complete satisfaction. Once they were outside, Atulchandra reminded Upendra about his remaining two questions. To a bewildered Atulchandra, his friend replied that in the answer to that one question, the Master had given a reply that answered all his three questions!

Swami Vivekananda would say often that one has to gather knowledge from the Self. But we are accustomed to getting knowledge from the shelf. That, we have seen, is not the way to gather knowledge; it is only stuffing the brain with others' ideas, often without assimilating the ideas. Many times Swamiji, while he was in the West, had to deliver extempore twelve to fourteen lectures a week! That amount of output could not be expected even from much reading. Even the great Swami felt that the exertion was so great that he had exhausted himself

10. Ibid., p. 46.

11. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1970), pp. 863–5.

intellectually.¹²

At such times he asked himself, 'What is to be done! What shall I say in my lecture tomorrow!' In this difficulty he was aided in wonderful ways. For instance, at dead of night he would hear a voice shouting at him the thoughts that he was to speak on the following day. Sometimes it would come as from a long distance, speaking to him down a great avenue; then it would draw nearer and nearer. Or it would be like someone delivering a lecture alongside of him, as he lay on his bed listening. At other times two voices would argue before him discussing at great length subjects that he would find himself repeating the following day from the platform or the pulpit. Sometimes these discussions introduced ideas that he had never heard of or thought of previously.

Swami Vivekananda spoke of these as being subjective, as automatic workings of the mind. He was always intent on finding a natural solution to such phenomena. Yet it must be noted that some people living in the same house with him would ask him in the morning, 'Swami, with whom were you talking last night? We heard you talking so loudly and enthusiastically, and were wondering!' His evasive answer would only leave them more mystified. Attributing these to the power and potentialities of the Self, he would deny anything miraculous about these events. We leave it to the imagination of the reader to find an explanation of the phenomenon.

Thus, we see that by being in touch with the Source of all knowledge, the divine inspiration flows in an uninterrupted manner, without exhaustion to the physical frame through which it flows unimpeded. Spiritual work never tires one, maintained Swamiji. There is no monotony in the answers and decisions coming from the divine Source. Further, it is ideal to the situation.

This ensures success, though the performer has not fixed his attention either on success or the fruits of his action. And when one day the power is withdrawn from him, the realization dawns on him that his role in the divine work is completely done. This we see in the lives of great ones. But then these exalted lives have a message for us too.

Ordinary human beings like us too can try to be in touch with the divine in some measure; rather we should. Sri Krishna says (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, III.5): 'Verily, no one can remain inactive even for a moment...'. Read with Sri Krishna's mandate, (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, VIII, 7) 'Always remember Me and fight,' it shows how one should lead one's life on earth. Swami Brahmananda puts this very idea in a form relatively easy for human beings to comprehend, remember and practise:¹³

Before you begin to work, remember the Lord and offer your salutations to Him. Do the same from time to time while you are working, and also after you have finished. Spend all your time thinking of the life, teachings and commandments of Sri Ramakrishna. Know in your heart of hearts that all the work you do is for His sake.

Let us not forget even for a moment that it is the Divine alone which is working in and through us whether we are aware of it or not, and that it is therefore practical for us to be in touch with the Divine at all times. That way we get to hear the Divine Command, to act in conformity with the Divine Will; else we hear only the foolish, egotistic commands of our bound and polluted minds and intellects. What really matters is our earnestness to be in touch with the Divine. Indeed, the Divine is ever in touch with us as the substratum; we have only to open ourselves to It every moment of our life.

(to be continued)

12. *Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1979), vol. 1, pp. 458-9.

13. *The Eternal Companion — Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1945), p. 177.

Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

द्विष्णुमये परे कोशे विरजं ब्रह्म निष्कलम्।
तच्छुभ्रं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिस्तद्यदात्मविदो विदुः॥

*Hiraṇmaye pare koṣe
virajam brahma niṣkalam;
Tac-chubhram jyotiṣāṃ jyotis-
tad-yad-ātmavido viduḥ. (II.ii.9)*

*In the supreme bright sheath is Brahman,
free from taint, without parts. It is pure and
the light of lights. It is That which knowers of
the soul do know (realize).*

The Upaniṣad says that 'I' is covered by a sheath as luminous and lustrous as shining gold. *Pare* means It is very sublime. Also Brahman is *virajam*, without stain or impurity, and *niṣkalam*, unadulterated and unmixed, brilliant in Itself. It cannot be cut into pieces, compartmentalized or partitioned. It is therefore a unified whole.

It is the source of effulgence and light of all effulgent things. We know that to see other things we need light. The eyes have a certain range within which lighted things are seen. But one's own existence needs no light or eyes to be seen or known. How do we know that 'I am', without the light of the eyes? What is the source of the luminosity for us in this perception? Physiologists wrongly say that consciousness is the consequence of a chemical reaction in the brain. Neither by the five senses, nor by the mind, nor by intelligence, is It perceived. But intelligence can surmise and rationally presume Its existence. Though It cannot be known through these mechanisms, yet the *antah-karāṇa* (the inner instrument) can be utilized in the search for the Atman within. There is

jyoti darśana (realization of effulgence) in the process of *sādhana* and there is *pranava-dhvanī-śravaṇa* (realizing the sound of *Oṃkāra*). As one 'hears' the *Oṃkāra* all the time, so does one also 'see' his *jyoti svarūpa*, his nature of effulgence. So, *jyotiṣāṃ jyoti* in this *mantra* means that It is the basis of relative consciousness, it is the *cetanā* of *Saccidānanda* Brahman. *Tat yat ātmavidāḥ viduḥ* means that That has been realized by the knowers of Atman, the *ṛṣis*, who having experienced It are trying to express in words that experience they had while established in *Brahmajñāna*.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति॥

*Na tatra sūryo bhāti, na candra-tārakam,
nemā vidyuto bhānti, kuto'yam-agniḥ;
Tam-eva bhāntam-anubhāti sarvaṃ,
tasya bhāsā sarvam-idaṃ vibhāti.
(II.ii.10)*

There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor do these flashes of lightning shine there; how can this fire do so? As He shines so does everything shine after Him; all this (this whole world) is illumined by His light.

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* there is a chapter known as *Jyotirbrāhmaṇa*. King Janaka asks, 'what light does a person here have?' He has the light of the sun, says Yājñavalkya. 'When the sun has set, Yājñavalkya, what light does a person here

have?', asks King Janaka. The moon indeed is his light, says Yājñavalkya. Then again the King asks, 'if sun has set and the moon has set, what light does a person here have?' The fire indeed is his light, says Yājñavalkya. To Janaka's further questions Yājñavalkya identifies speech as light, when the sun has set, the moon has set, and there is no fire even. To Janaka's final question, Yājñavalkya says, that when the sun has set, the moon has set, and the fire has gone out, and speech has stopped, the Self indeed is his light (*ātmaivāsyā jyotir-bhavati*). Similarly, the student, being oriented externally and materially, seeks the source of luminosity outside. The teacher says that if in a place at night there is no moon, no stars, fire or fireflies, then what is the source of light? The student keeps quiet and the teacher asks, 'do you experience your own existence? Where does this luminosity come from?' Then the student understands that It is the *cetanā* (consciousness) of *Saccidānanda* Brahman that makes him aware that 'I exist' without the help of any external light, and It is the light of the whole universe. Physicists who study the external world say that the cosmos is but energy, but they do not proceed to the next logical step that, I being a part of the cosmos, that energy is also within me. Indian spiritual scientists find at first that *sarvam khalvīdān brahma*, everything that appears is verily Brahman. The next step is that if everything is Brahman, then *ayam ātmā brahma*. This Atman is Brahman because I am a part of the universe. Finally, if theoretically the above two steps are proved, then the search for Brahman ends in *aham brahmāsmi*, I am the divine. The scriptures declare that this realization occurs when the body-consciousness ends, *jīvātmā* merges in *Paramātmā*; then wherever the eyes roam there only Reality is seen luminous behind the veil of appearance.

When one is in *nirvikalpa samādhi* in the realization of Brahman, it matters not whether there is darkness or light. In fact, the

sun, the moon, the stars do not shine 'there', and whether they are there or whether they have set makes no difference because in that ultimate experience the luminosity is provided by one's own consciousness. Nor is there lightning, much less the earthly, man-made fire. And as that consciousness shines within one, so do all things shine accordingly. *Anubhāti* means that the *sarvā*, the all, all this is lighted up by the borrowed light of Brahman. As the moon has no luminosity of its own, but it shines by the reflected light of the sun, so in this diverse universe there is only one point of effulgence—the *cit-svarūpa* Atman (conscious Self). While the sun, the moon, the stars and everything shine because of It, we mistakenly think of them as the source of light. The real source of effulgence is the consciousness, the knowledge, the awareness *within* us. And everything is the object (the seen) of our knowledge. Because knowledge of our true original nature of consciousness has dawned on us, we understand that Atman alone is the subject (the seer, the illuminator).

ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद्ब्रह्म
पश्चाद्ब्रह्म दक्षिणतश्चोत्तरेण।
अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं
ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम्॥

Brahmaivedam-amṛtaṁ purastād-brahma,
paścād-brahma dakṣiṇataś-cottareṇa;
Adhaścordhvaṁ ca prasṛtaṁ
brahmaivedaṁ viśvam-idaṁ varīṣṭham.
(II.ii.11)

Indeed Brahman, the immortal, is all this that is in front and behind; Brahman is on the right as well as on the left; above and below too is stretched forth Brahman alone. This world is nothing but Brahman, the highest.

The conclusion is wonderful. Without any doubt it is Brahman alone which is im-
(Continued on page 450)

The Tortoise Trail

SWAMI BRAHMESHANANDA

Swami Brahmeshananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and Editor of The Vedanta Kesari, discusses in this article what concerns every spiritual aspirant. The tortoise simile is taken up to emphasize that besides the power of tucking in its limbs the tortoise has also other characteristics, each an important guide to the behaviour of a spiritual aspirant.

The control of the sense-organs has been emphasized as the sine qua non of spiritual endeavour by all the scriptures of the world. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, its importance has been stressed over and over again. It is significant that as many as eleven verses out of eighteen of the celebrated *sthūtiprajñā-lakṣaṇas*, describing the characteristics of a man of steady wisdom, have been devoted to the subject of the control of the senses. In the fifty-eighth verse of the second chapter, the withdrawal of the sense-organs by a man of steady wisdom has been aptly compared to the withdrawal of its limbs by a tortoise. Since this characteristic of the tortoise to pull its limbs within its shell at imminent danger is well known, most commentators of the *Bhagavad-Gita* have not elaborately commented upon this verse. However, on deeper thought one finds many other traits in a tortoise which are also found in a man of steady wisdom, and which could prove extremely beneficial to a spiritual aspirant.

The withdrawal of limbs is the only defence available for this poor creature. It can neither fight nor fly away when threatened by danger. A man of steady wisdom too does not waste his energies in fighting against circumstances to modify them or in running away from them. He does not react physically, vocally, or mentally. Since the characteristics of a man of steady wisdom are by implication the virtues to be practised by a spiritual aspirant, the latter must realize that trying to change the environment or

escaping from it is never the right spiritual approach. Control of the senses is the only spiritual defence. There is no other way. A tortoise would never protrude out its limbs even if cut into pieces. Similarly, a spiritual aspirant must never yield to the senses or allow them to run outward. But one cannot physically pull the senses within as the tortoise does. One may close the eyes or at the most plug one's ears to avoid sight and sound. That is not the right answer. It must be a mental withdrawal of the senses within. One of the best examples of this is found in the life of Sri Chaitanya. In order to test his self-control before ordaining him a sannyasin, his guru placed some grains of sugar on his tongue. There was no reactive secretion of saliva, and the grains remained as dry as before.

The next characteristic of the tortoise is its single-mindedness. If you lift a tortoise crawling in a specific direction and place it back on the ground with its face turned in another direction, it would change its position and start moving in the original direction. Likewise, a man of steady wisdom, as the phrase itself suggests, has the goal and various other concepts of life well set. A spiritual aspirant must similarly have the goal of his life so firmly fixed in his mind that he may, under no circumstances, deviate from it. He must never relinquish the aim of life under threats or temptations.

Sri Ramakrishna too has pointed out another of the features of a tortoise. It moves

about all over the lake, but its mind is fixed on the bank where lie its eggs. Similarly, a spiritual aspirant must always keep a part of his mind always in God, even while engaged in the duties of life.

A tortoise moves with great steadiness, patience, and perseverance, and not in fits and starts, as the hare in Aesop's fable. It does not seem to be in a hurry; but for that matter, it does not stop on the way, nor does it lessen or hasten its speed. A man of steady wisdom too is in no hurry, because he knows he is immortal. This characteristic of the tortoise has great significance for a spiritual aspirant. He too must be steady and persevering. He must not stop till the goal is reached.

The shape and build of the tortoise is very suitable for safety and stability. It is flat with almost no height, and moves practically glued to the ground. It has, therefore, no danger of getting toppled. Nor has the man of steady wisdom. A spiritual aspirant must be humble and keep his ego low. Then he too would not have the danger of a spiritual fall.

A tortoise has a hard shell without, while its limbs and the lower parts of the body are delicate. Likewise, a man of steady wisdom too can be hard as a thunderbolt, if need be, and yet is as soft as a flower. A spiritual aspirant too must have a rough exterior. It acts as a great protective shell. Yet he must have the tenderest feelings of love and compassion for all creatures.

The turtle, the oceanic cousin of the tortoise, can plunge deep within the ocean

and lie there undisturbed for a long time. It often happens that many spiritual aspirants are not able to have deep spiritual experiences. Even if they have, they are not able to remain established in them. They are recognized as specific hindrances in the path of yoga (*alabdhiabhiṇīkatva* and *anavasthitatva*). This characteristic of the turtle thus points towards a quality which is very important for an aspirant and which he must cultivate. A man of steady wisdom is, in contrast to many spiritual aspirants, one who has, like a turtle, dived deep within himself, has collected the gems of spirituality, and, having reached the goal, remains established therein.

The control of the sense-organs, as advocated so strongly by the *Bhagavad-Gita*, cannot be truly and effectively achieved without the cultivation of many other virtues. The elaborate meaning of this fifty-eighth verse of the second chapter of the *Gita* would, therefore, be:

Just as a steady, persevering, single-minded, humble, non-reacting tortoise, with an ability to dive deep and remain there, withdraws its limbs from all sides, so also when a man having these qualities withdraws his senses from their objects, then his wisdom is said to be established.

Let the spiritual aspirant imbibe some of the qualities of the tortoise by meditating upon this unique creature. It is not for nothing that the Lord, according to Hindu mythology, chose to incarnate Himself as a turtle. □

The mind alone is the field wherein is planted the seed of lust. The seed is nurtured by the sense-organs within and the sense-objects without. Thus it increases and multiplies. The weeds that grow from it have to be uprooted, the seed has to be destroyed and the holy name of God sown in its place. Constant repetition of the holy name will nurture the seed and cause it to bring forth much fruit.

—Swami Saradananda, *Precepts for Perfection*, p. 118

A Saint's Call to Mankind

DR. R.D. MAIDULY

The author, Dr. Maiduly of New Delhi, says in this article that 'what the world requires at this juncture is a spiritual orientation'. Quoting Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna, the author points out how we should build our spiritual life on a strong foundation and direct our energies to the one goal of human life.

Today we are at a critical period not merely in the history of our own country but of the world as well. There is a disintegration of values, lowering of standards, widespread escapism, and a good deal of mass hysteria. People think of it and collapse in despair, frustration and a sense of hopelessness. The world is suffering from a secularized, mechanized outlook. It is really unfortunate that we are still the victims of an out-moded nationalism, out-moded because the world we are living in is eager for the development of a world community based on unity and harmony as distinct from unanimity and uniformity. We look upon this world of the senses as paramount. The things of the world are undoubtedly necessary. But there is a superior presence, a higher reality, without which nothing in this world can live or move or have its own being.

So many things are happening around us daily which tend to de-humanize human beings. They are all leading us to believe that man has no hold on the development of events, that events will take their course despite human effort to check or alter human destiny. What the world requires at this juncture is a spiritual orientation and, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, we have to rely on our own spiritual resources to effect the transformation.

In a lecture delivered in London Swami Vivekananda said:

The old religion said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The

new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself.¹

And speaking in New York on 'The Cosmos: The Microcosm', he said:

...stand up, be bold, be strong. Take the whole responsibility on your own shoulders, and know that you are the creator of your own destiny.²

Scientific Spirit

Swami Vivekananda lived at a time when the scientific spirit was at its height. He was himself rooted in the spirit of science. His quest for Truth was matched by the scientist's dedication to pry into the mysteries of nature. He was dissatisfied with the practices prevalent in popular Hinduism. He joined the Brahmo Samaj, the activities of which were dynamic and new in sharp contrast to the moribund state of Hindu society. Though the intellectual atmosphere of the Brahmo Samaj satisfied him for while, it soon dawned on him that if God was to be realized, he was no nearer the goal than before he had joined the Samaj. He became an agnostic and his very agnosticism impressed on him the meaninglessness of all things. He questioned whether there was any ultimate truth by whatever name it be called, and whether man could attain it. His restless spirit was eager for the attainment

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 2, p. 301. [Hereafter *Complete Works*.]

2. *Complete Works*, vol. 2, p. 225.

of wisdom. In his own words:

It took me thirty years to learn it; thirty years of hard struggle. Sometimes I worked at it twenty hours during the twenty-four; sometimes I slept only one hour in the night; sometimes I worked whole nights; sometimes I lived in places where there was hardly a sound, hardly a breath; sometimes I had to live in caves. Think of that. And yet I know little or nothing; I have barely touched the hem of the garment of this science. But I can understand that it is true and vast and wonderful.³

Today many of us are content to passively look upon the greatness which Swami Vivekananda achieved. But it is an eye-opener to know *how* he attained that greatness, the harsh realities of life which he encountered and surmounted, the exercises he undertook, the way in which he transmuted his intractable nature to serve the Divine purpose.

Gift of Swamiji

He taught us the Indian way of life which combines science, religion and humanism. There can be no science without the recognition of a pattern behind the cosmic mystery. We are humanistic because we feel a kinship to human beings. God is our eternal Companion, the Indweller, perpetually present with us and in us, that prompts us to divinize existence. Swamiji speaks of this irresistible tendency in man to manifest his divinity when he said:

A hundred times man will hurt himself, a thousand times he will tumble, but in the end he will realize that he is God....We are all projected from one common centre, which is God.... 'From whom all beings are projected, in whom all live, and unto whom they all return; that is God.'⁴

This alone is the true religion which takes us out of the feverishness of mind, confusions and ambiguities in our understanding of the human spirit, and the anarchy of creeds. Thus he gave us out of the certainty of realization a faith to live by. He taught us fortitude in suffering. He gave us hope when in distress and courage when in despair. He told us that we are born not merely to grow like trees and amass vast material possessions but to manifest our true divine nature.

Many of us think that we are religious, but we are really atheists in the sense that we worship the world of matter, power and the devil. These are the things which attract our attention and capture our minds. Let us realize that the supreme is mysterious, for it cannot be expressed in words or through propositions, and, if we quarrel about words, dogmas and propositions used by different religions, it means that we have not grasped the verbal inexpressibility of God-head.

Swamiji says that higher realization is possible only through spiritual disciplines, and that these disciplines are possible only by minds that have undergone a long process of purification and ethical culture culminating in an intense longing for the Lord. As Swamiji says,

...at last he comes to recognize this marvellous duality of existence: the subject, infinite and finite in one—the Infinite Being is also the same finite soul. The Infinite is caught, as it were, in the meshes of the intellect and apparently manifests as finite beings, but the reality remains unchanged.... This is, therefore, true knowledge; that the Soul of our souls, the Reality that is within us, is That which is unchangeable, eternal, ever-blessed, ever-free. This is the only solid ground for us to stand upon.⁵

True Spirituality

A common question that confronts a

3. *Complete Works*, vol. 2, p. 22.

4. *Complete Works*, vol. 1, p. 416.

5. *Complete Works*, vol. 2, pp. 401–02.

spiritual aspirant is: how far do external observances, rituals and socio-religious rites have a bearing on spiritual growth? According to Swamiji, they are related as husk to the grain. Though the husk does not become the plant, yet if the seed is to sprout at all, it should not be separated from the husk. Rituals and external observances are like the husk and do not constitute spirituality; though they fall off in the fullness of time, yet for the beginner their protective and educative influence is highly necessary.

A large number of caste-rules observed in India and several principles of social etiquette practised in other advanced societies are meant to be safeguards in the early stages of one's spiritual life. When a man has grown spiritually, he naturally transcends these rules, but there is no wisdom in prematurely brushing them aside assuming an air of spiritual superiority. Such men are like raw mangoes ripened through artificial processes—they look ripe but do not taste as sweet as the naturally ripened ones.

Among external observances helpful for the growth of devotion, the institutions of image worship and pilgrimage occupy an important place. Just as a man learns to write by drawing big scrawls at first, so an aspirant may need to acquire the power of mental concentration by first fixing the mind on images and other symbols. Again, in the case of one who is truly devoted, the divine image creates a vivid consciousness of God, just as a toy fruit and a toy elephant call to the mind the real fruit and the real elephant. For many people image worship is absolutely necessary for spiritual growth.

Places of pilgrimage can help only those who have at least some devotion within and are inspired by the religious and historical background of that place. Sri Ramakrishna used to say,

As cows after eating their fill of fodder lie quietly down at a place and chew the cud, so after visiting a holy spot or a place of pilgrimage, you must take hold

of the holy thoughts that rise in the mind there, sit down in a solitary spot and think of them till you become immersed in them. You must not let them slip off from your mind as soon as you turn away from those places, and attach yourselves to sense-pursuits. In that case the divine thoughts bring no lasting effect on the mind.⁶

Obstacles

Those who set their minds on occult powers do not rise to higher levels of spirituality. It is dangerous too to have occult powers, for, men who are not possessed of control over the senses are sure to misuse them and lose the powers also. It is also foolish for a spiritual aspirant to go after occult powers, because, to pray to God for such powers is akin to a man seeking trifles from a king.

Another obstacle in the way of spiritual aspiration is a narrow and fanatical outlook. Though a dog recognizes his master in any garb he may wear, the religious fanatic fails to recognize his own God when he is presented in terms and concepts that are not familiar to him. All religions invoke the same reality, be it by the name of Allah, Christ, Rama or Krishna, Hari or Brahman, to mention a few. Every religion is a path to God as the different *ghats* of a tank leading to the same water. The right attitude for an aspirant is therefore not to dispute the truth of different religions but to follow his own faith showing respect for other religions as well with a spirit of acceptance.

Spiritual striving is the quest after God who is the soul of truth, and as such, unless one adheres to truth in all matters, one cannot progress. Through truth one can realize God, and to be truthful is *tapas*, austerity. The great task in spiritual life is to make

6. *Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1975), pp. 239–40. [Hereafter *Teachings*.]

thought, word and deed tally.

Equally important is brahmacharya or continence. Sexuality colours the mind and dissipates one's energies. Thus, the mind of one who indulges in sex is unfit to reflect the divine because it loses the vigour needed for the steep ascent to the realm of the spirit. That is why sannyasa, requiring absolute celibacy, is recommended for those who aspire after the higher achievements in spiritual life.

An aspirant must wean himself from extreme attachment to the body. Though a devotee shall be aware of the worthlessness and transitoriness of the body, he must take care of it in order that it may be a fit instrument for practising spiritual disciplines, but on that score there must not be excessive cultivation of body idea. He must patiently bear illness and other sufferings of the body. They are the taxes which the soul has to pay for the use of the body, even as the tenant pays the house-rent for the use of the house.

A sincere aspirant should strive his utmost to overcome the bondage of the senses. As to how these passions, like lust and anger, can be conquered, Sri Ramakrishna says,

So long as these passions are directed towards the world and its objects they are enemies, but when they are directed towards the Deity, they become the best friends of man, for they take him to God. The desire for things worldly must be changed into longing for God, the anger which you feel towards your fellow-creatures must be directed towards God, for not manifesting Himself to you, and so on with all the other passions. The passions need not, and cannot be eradicated, but they can be educated and turned into

a different channel.⁷

For those who have not already attained perfection, it will also be necessary to keep aloof from objects of temptation as far as possible. Sri Ramakrishna therefore prescribed remaining in solitude, at least for some days.

All mental and moral training that a spiritual aspirant undergoes is to build a secure foundation for building the edifice of devotional life. Hence, prayer and cultivation of devotion are of utmost importance. Man need not postpone cultivating the habits of prayer till he arrives at a settled conviction about the nature of God. One may even attribute to God various forms and yet have no faith in them. God, will even then bestow His grace on a person if he believes in a divine power and prays with a yearning heart, 'Oh God, I do not know Thy real nature; deign to reveal Thyself to me as Thou art.'

If the spirit of devotion is thus cultured there is little danger for an aspirant. The ship of life steers clear of every danger, if the mind, its compass needle, is always turned towards God without vacillation.

Let us recall Swami Vivekananda's message of hope and inspiration for all mankind:

Therefore, there is hope for all. None can die; none can be degraded for ever. Life is but a playground, however gross the play may be. However we may receive blows, and however knocked about we may be, the Soul is there and is never injured. We are that Infinite.⁸ □

7. *Teachings*, p. 117.

8. *Complete Works*, vol. 2, p. 402.

A man gradually feels weak when he contemplates external nature. ...therefore, it is not the study of external nature that makes one strong. But there is the internal nature of man—a million times more powerful.

—Swami Vivekananda

Sri Guru Granth Sahib

JASBIR KAUR AHUJA

Sri Guru Granth Sahib embodies in itself a universal message. The tenth Guru declared that 'he could be found in its hymns if diligently sought'. The constituents of the Granth Sahib did not take birth at one time. In fact, they were composed over a span of six centuries, from the twelfth to the seventeenth century. Being a compilation of the message of the Sikh Gurus, and other saints and poets who moved from place to place, several languages and dialects are found in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The learned author discusses in detail the universality and practicality of the spiritual message enshrined in the Granth Sahib.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib embodies in itself a universal message. The 'Adi-Granth' as it was known then, was first compiled by Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Sikh Guru, in AD 1604. Subsequently, in AD 1705–1706, under the direction of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, the hymns of Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Guru, were incorporated in the same order according to the ragas and genres as in the earlier volume. Since then, this holy scripture has been a perennial source of inspiration to the people.

Sri Guru Granth embodies the Guru's own words. Thus, it is also called 'Guru-bani', the Guru's Word. Through it the Guru speaks to his followers from age to age. He who attentively reads, sings or listens to its hymns is brought into direct personal contact with the Guru who, in a very real sense, is 'incarnate' in these hymns. Immediately on its completion, Guru Arjan Dev bade the Sikhs to regard it with reverence as they regarded the Guru's own person and, on his passing from their midst, the tenth Guru declared that, 'he could be found in its hymns if diligently sought'.¹

According to the tradition started by Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru, of trans-

mitting spiritual power to the successor, the final act of Guru Gobind Singh has been described thus:

He opened the Granth Sahib and placing five paise and a coconut before it, solemnly bowed to it as his successor. Then uttering 'Wahguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wahguru Ji Ki Fateh!', he circumambulated the sacred volume and said, 'O beloved Khalsa! Let him who desireth to behold me, behold the Guru Granth. Obey the Granth Sahib. It is the visible body of the Guru. And let him who desireth to meet me diligently search its hymns.'²

While composing Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Arjan Dev included in it the compositions of the first five Sikh Gurus—Guru Nanak, Guru Angad Dev, Guru Amar Dass, Guru Ram Dass, and his own—, along with those of Kabir, Namdev, Trilochan, Sen, Ravidas, Sadhna, Dhana, Pipa, Jaidev, Baba Farid and other saints. Regarding the poetry of his predecessors, he had an access to the manuscripts handed down in the family. Baba Mohan, son of Guru Amar Dass, was approached, and he too, though reluctantly, handed over the manuscripts available with

1. *The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib* (Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1968), p. cxlvii.

2. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, 1909, vol. 5, p. 244.

him. The eulogies of the bards were personally given by the bards or their sons. Hymns were also collected from the disciples of Kabir, Namdev and other contemporary saints who lived in the Punjab at that time. The rest of the collection must have been taken from other manuscripts, the details of which are not available. To quote Dr. S.S. Kohli:

The constituents of *Granth Sahib* did not take their birth at one time. They were composed in different periods. Jaidev, the Bengali saint of the twelfth century, is the oldest composer included in the Holy Book. Namdev, the famous Maharashtrian poet, belonged to the fourteenth century. Guru Nanak and his successors lived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thus we find that the *Granth Sahib* covers a span of six centuries.

It is really amazing how Guru Arjan, the compiler of the *Granth Sahib*, was able to go through the vast amount of not only the contemporary compositions, but also the poetical works of the saints gone by, for the purpose of selection. The selection was made on the basis of ideology.³

Sri Guru Granth Sahib starts with Japuji, the morning prayer. It is followed by Rahiras, the evening prayer. Next comes Kirtan Sohila, the night prayer.

Another outstanding feature of the *Guru Granth* is the precision and beauty of its prosody. While a great deal of it is cast in traditional verse forms (Slokas and Paudits) and can best be understood in the context of well-known classical ragas, several hymns and songs make use of popular folk-lore and metres (like alahanis, ghoris and chands, etc.). The inner and integral relationship between music and verse has been maintained....

The entire Bani, whose printed version in its current form comes to 1,430 pages, is divided into 33 sections. Whilst the first section comprises the inspiring song of Guru Nanak called Japuji,... the final section is a collection of assorted verses including the Slokas and the Svayyas of the Bhattas. The remaining 31 sections are named after the well-known classical ragas such as Sri, Majh, Gauri, Gujri, Devgandhari, Dhansari, Bilval, Kedara, Malhar, Kalyan, etc. The division thus is strictly based on musicology. Furthermore, each psalm or song is preceded by a number (Mohalla) which denotes the name of the composer-Guru from Guru Nanak onwards. Each Guru speaks in the name of the Founder Guru whose spirit informs his nine successors.... The major hymns—Japuji (Guru Nanak), Anand (Guru Amar Dass), Sukhmani or the Psalm of Peace (Guru Arjan Dev), Rahras (Guru Nanak, Guru Ram Dass, Guru Arjan Dev)—are widely recited solo and in congregation by the faithful, as morning and evening prayers. Their soothing and ambrosial airs have brought solace and cheer to millions of people all over the world. The Sikh philosophy embodied in the *Guru Granth* is chiefly a philosophy of action and consequence.⁴

Several languages and dialects are found in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. This is because the saints who composed it moved from place to place and also because they belonged to different regions. Guru Nanak Dev travelled from Punjab to Assam, from the Himalayas to Ceylon, and even to Mecca-Medina in the Middle East. Kabir also travelled to various parts of India. Namdev is believed to have come to the Punjab and there is a sacred place in his

3. Dr. S.S. Kohli, *A Critical Study of Adi Granth* (New Delhi: Punjabi Writers' Co-operative Society Ltd., 1961), Introductory Remarks.

4. Dr. Taran Singh, *Guru Granth Ratnavali* (Patiala: Punjabi University, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies Department), Preface, p. 29.

memory in Gurdaspur district. Being folk-poets, they spoke in the language which was understood by the masses. Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan Dev wrote in Sanskrit also. In their compositions, poets are generally influenced by the regions they hail from. Namdev's language, for instance, contains conjugational endings of Marathi. The poetry of the Gurus shows the influence of the Punjab. The influence of Marathi, Gujarathi, Avadhi, Eastern Punjabi, Lendhi, Dakhni, Hindi, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit and Prakrit are also visible in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. It is a valuable treasure of medieval Indian languages.

According to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, everything is created by Him and He lives in His own creation:

This world is the residence of the True Lord / And He lives within it. (Var Asa Shalok Mohalla 2)

The Jivas and the world are the creations of God. Guru Arjan Dev says, 'Unity becomes plurality and plurality ultimately becomes Unity.' (Majh Mohalla 5)

God is one. He is the Creator. He is devoid of fear and enmity. He is deathless and birthless. He is self-existent. He can be realized by the grace of the Guru. Thus, according to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, God is a treasure-house of perfect qualities. His name is Truth. All other names except *sat-nam* are composed (*Kirtam*) names. There are several *Kirtam* names used, because they were more clearly understood by the people of different sects. Sikhs attach special significance to the name 'Wahiguru'. It was used by the bards.

God is the Creator of the whole universe. God is the only eternal entity which has created *Purusas* and *Prakriti*. He is the *Purusa* distinct from other *Purusas*. He is the *Paramatma* from whom other *Atmas* emanate. He is *Adi*, *Paramadi* and even *Anadi*. He is the Creator of the three *Gunas*—Tamas,

Rajas and Sattva. These *Gunas* are created through His Maya. God is believed to have two aspects: *Vikaravartin*, immanent in the world, and *Trigunatita*, the transcendent aspect dissociated from Maya.

He is *Nirguna* as well as *Saguna*

Who hath illusioned others

by wielding *Sakti*.

God takes *Saguna* form to satisfy His devotees according to their desires and entreaties.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib dwells also on the microcosm. Our body is itself a small world wherein God lives. The whole universe is epitomized in our body. The true seekers explore the body and discover the treasures hidden in it. God can be realized by the grace of a true Guru. The Guru means the Divine Teacher. In *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* God Himself has been described as *Jagat-Guru*. The true Guru is verily an ocean of truth and knowledge. The knowledge he imparts is always true. Guru himself being the light of knowledge, his words shed light to all humanity.

The Guru gives the *Nam*, the Name of the Lord, to his disciple and teaches him the method of remembering it always. When the disciple practises this constant remembrance, the mist of illusion is removed. He attains the state of Nirvana. The disciple feels himself blessed when he meets the true Guru. He places his body, mind and all his possessions at the feet of the Guru and uses them under his instructions. The Guru loves such a disciple even as a mother loves her child.

The Name of the Lord is the Lord Himself. The Word of the Guru is the Guru himself. The Guru and God are one. The disciple bows before the Guru even in the presence of God, because it is through the grace of the Guru that the disciple is able to realize God. What is the Name? Prof. Teja Singh calls it, 'the manifestation of God or His attributes, His bounties, His mercies, from which we

know Him.' Dr. Sher Singh says, 'A body is dead without life, and life is dead without *Nam*. It is the link connecting the infinite soul with its infinite parent, God.'⁵

So great a gift as the Name of the Lord can come to us only by treading a worthy way; God confers it through the Guru, the saintly devotee, whom He sends to us when we are ready to receive Him. With what joy we drink the nectar of God's love! Without that nectar, we die of thirst; apart from God, we cannot live in the parching heat of worldliness. Let us cling to the society of saints day and night so that we may always have Him in mind and heart, and so enjoy the sweet delight of life eternal!⁶

Satsang or holy company is essential for a happy life. When a person enjoys holy company, the grace of the Lord is assured. The saint is attuned to God. He always lives in His presence. Even a sinner rises very high spiritually in the company of saints.

The parable of Ajamal and such other parables show the power of the Name of the Lord and also of prayer. Ajamal's wicked deeds were washed away by the grace of the Lord and, even the god of justice could not do anything to punish Ajamal for his sinful deeds. To attain grace, one has to make effort and not sit passive. Love, i.e., *Prema Bhakti*, is essential. The ideal can be achieved with the help of the Guru and the *mantra* received through him. Truthful life and remembrance of the Name of the Lord lead one to *Nirvana*.

Nirvana has been named as *Chauthi Pad* (Fourth State) in *Adi Granth*. This Fourth State is attained by the disciple who rises above the first three states, i.e., waking (*ja-grat*), dream (*svapna*) and dreamless sleep (*susupti*). He also rises above the three qualities, i.e., *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. The world lies within the fold of *Maya*—the three states

and the three qualities. Very few persons attain to the Fourth State, and this is possible only through the grace of the Guru. The Fourth State is also known as *Turiya Avastha*. In Yogic terminology, this state is known as *Unman*.⁷ This word also occurs in *Adi Granth* (Prabhati Mohalla 4).

There are five steps in spiritual development epitomized in Japuji Sahib of Guru Nanak. These stages are named as *Dharam Khand*, the *Gian Khand*, *Saram Khand*, *Karam*⁸ *Khand* and *Sach Khand*, which respectively mean the stages of duty, knowledge, efforts, grace and truth. The seeker of God rises from the moral plane to the spiritual plane. Morality forms the basis of spiritual advancement. Guru Nanak Dev preached that, 'Truth is the highest of all, but higher still is truthful living.'

The religion of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is universal and practical. No distinction based on caste, colour, or creed is recognized. The *Brahmana*, *Ksatriya* and *Vaisya*, all sit together with the so-called *Sudra*. The Hindu sits with the Muslim. The king sits with the lowly. In *Langar*, i.e., community meals, all sit together and partake the *prasada* (sacred food). In *Sangat* (congregation), all sit and sing together the Holy Hymns. The message of love, truth, contentment, humility, fatherhood of God, brotherhood of man, restraint on passion, mercy to living beings, purity of body and mind, search for the self, and the Higher Soul, equality of man and woman, service to others, liberalism in the manner of food and clothing make it a universal religion. It is a religion of devotion and surrender to the will of God. Guru Bhakti plays a prominent role. Whatever the Gurus preached was practised by them.

(Continued on page 462)

5. Quoted by Duncan Greenlees in the *Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib*, p. clxv.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

7. Dr. S.S. Kohli, *A Critical Study of Adi Granth Sahib*, p. 363.

8. The word 'Karam' used here has been taken from the Persian which means 'grace'.

A Prescription for Happiness

S. NATARAJAN

The author, an Electrical Engineer by profession with 34 years of experience in the Management Cadre of the Indian Railways, is pained by the trend towards materialistic acquisitions, particularly noticed among public servants. In this thought-provoking article, he stresses cultivating values in life which alone can lead to true happiness especially in the case of people with not so high levels of intelligence and maturity.

Nobody comes into this world on his own volition. Death is also inevitable. Except in rare cases, man has no clue as to when that event will occur in his life. Therefore, life, the interval between birth and death, is all what one can be concerned about, and indeed, is. One has no doubt some control over the quality of life one leads, at least during most of one's adulthood. Secure in this knowledge of his ability to control it, every person sets before himself certain goals and calls them his aims, aspirations or even ambitions. These goals can be varied, such as:

1. Acquisition of wealth, material prosperity, luxury and worldly pleasures which money can fetch,
2. Acquisition of power, prestige, fame, recognition, etc.,
3. Acquisition of knowledge,
4. Maintenance of good health, excellent physical fitness, appearance and the ability to impress others,
5. A spirit of adventure, attempting difficult tasks for their own sake,
6. Service to society,
7. Excellence in fine-arts, sports, etc.,
8. Spiritual, philosophical and religious pursuits including the life of a recluse.

A person could have one or more of these as his goals. He could also assign different priorities amongst them, and also change these priorities as age advances and/or circumstances change.

There may be a few who do not have any aspiration whatsoever. They live from day to day, with nothing to look back upon or forward to. It is inert existence, not life. Such individuals are a rarity and perhaps most of what follows will not concern them.

By scrutinising the above list depicting the variety and multiplicity of goals before man, we shall not fail to observe that a goal deliberately not included in the above list is happiness. The reason for its omission is that happiness is the single underlying driving force for most, if not all, of these goals. In simple terms, to be happy is, without doubt, the state most sought-after by any mature adult.

We must recognize that there are a handful of persons, mostly saints, philosophers and thinkers, who contemplate and meditate for long to realize what they consider to be 'true knowledge' and in this process they make a conscious effort to control the mind and direct it to reach a specific goal. There are a few others, also of similar disposition, who hold that the persistent and formidable mind-body identity and man's ego are the root causes of all problems and that the very process of thinking about controlling the mind is of doubtless utility. To both these categories of people, true happiness comes from the realization of what they consider to be the Ultimate Truth or Reality underlying this universe. The levels of intelligence and maturity needed for comprehension and practice of such philosophies

are beyond ordinary mortals, most of whom have to engage themselves daily in performing specific tasks even for mere survival. This article is meant for such people.

A prescription for happiness is simple enough, being two-fold: (1) Contentment and Discontent, (2) Service *not* Burden.

Contentment and Discontent

A. *Contentment* with one's present state or situation; or, at least reconciliation to such a state; and a deliberate restraint from longing for more of a thing or for something different for oneself, especially in regard to material possessions.

B. *Discontent* with what one has given, contributed to or shared with others for their well being, by word or deed. 'Others' will include one's family members, neighbours and people in the organization where one works as well as the organization itself; 'others' could also include the society as a whole, particularly the handicapped and the down-trodden. In this case, propelled by a feeling of discontent with one's contribution, a deliberate striving to improve upon the quality and extent of one's effort should be made by an individual.

Some *lack of contentment* and a consequent craving to overcome a handicap in oneself could be justified in (A), if these arise from a genuine concern for others and are needed to enable a striving, resulting from such discontent in (B), to do better. This exception would apply to the acquisition of more knowledge and better health for *oneself* and would not *ordinarily* extend to acquisition of material wealth and possessions.

Thus contentment and discontent have to coexist in a person and be balanced in such a manner as to produce optimum results beneficial to the individual as well as the society. In simple terms this means a constant striving to be content with the minimum for oneself and be discontent with oneself only for being unable to give more and better things to others within the framework of the capabilities one has or for not

possessing capabilities in sufficient measure to serve others better. This is the first prescription for happiness.

Service not Burden

The second prescription for happiness relates to one's attitude to the multitude of tasks, big or small, that one performs in his daily life. An average adult is awake for about 16 to 18 hours in a day. Of these, he spends about 4 to 6 hours on routine activities relating to one's physical, mental and intellectual needs and, in the case of city dwellers, for commuting between the place of residence and the place of work. During most of the remaining 12 hours, a person is actively engaged in some work or other. It is during this period that his attitude to the task at hand contributes to his happiness or unhappiness.

It is a common knowledge that the quality of any task performed willingly is vastly superior to that done under compulsion. The end product of the former would bring greater joy to the individual, while the poor quality of the latter would lead to frustration and depression with a cascading negative effect.

The question, then, is how can one derive joy from doing any type of work? What should one's attitude towards work be? The answer is to treat any work one does or one is required to do, not as a burden but as *sevā* (worshipful service) to those around. And with this attitude one will soon enjoy doing work. On the other hand, if one thinks that a certain task has to be done to earn a living, or to satisfy someone who is insistent, there will be no pleasure in doing it. This truism applies whether one labours on the land, works in a factory, sits in an office, prepares a dish in the kitchen or cleans up the toilet at home. This is the second prescription for happiness.

As a maxim it may be said: *if you learn to love what you do, you will always be doing what you love.* □

Role of Devotees in the Promotion of Ramakrishna Mission's Ideals

DR. LATA DESAI

We give below the text of the speech delivered by Dr. Lata Desai, pediatrician by profession, a social worker, and Managing Trustee of SEWA (Society for Education, Welfare, and Action) Rural in Jhaghadia, Gujarat, India, at the All-India Devotees' Convention held at Belur Math on 7 February 1998. SEWA Rural is a voluntary organization started by a group of friends inspired by the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhiji. It has been working for health and development in a rural tribal belt of western India since 1980.

In the talk, Dr. Desai highlighted the role devotees of Sri Ramakrishna can play in the promotion of the Mission's objectives. The captivating talk was highly appreciated by the audience, which reveals that the speaker was entirely in harmony with her auditors on the points she mentioned. One therefore expects that her suggestions will be well received by the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna all over the world.

We have assembled here from the different parts of the world and in today's afternoon session we shall share ideas about the role of devotees in the promotion of Ramakrishna Mission's ideals. We have heard from several people this morning what constitute the ideals of the Mission. It is indeed a very high, enchanting and attractive ideal and perhaps easy to grasp intellectually. But let us stop for a moment and look at ourselves in the light of these great ideals. We realize that quite often our devotion stops at visiting temples, saluting the swamis, having prasada, and studying and discussing the scriptures. All these things are good and necessary too, but do Sri Ramakrishna, Ma and Swamiji want us to stop there? I think that they will be happier by seeing us make an effort to implement their teachings in our day-to-day life.

I envisage life as a ladder, at the top of which the twin ideals of God-realization and the good of all (*Ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca*) are fully manifested. Each one

of us needs to look at oneself, think clearly and deeply, and determine where one is in relation to this spiritual ladder. We must begin from where we are and progress up from there. We need not be overzealous, neither do we need to underestimate ourselves. Each of us is at a different step of the ladder, with one's own temperament, aptitude, education, vocation and capacity. But each of us can and should contribute to the cause of the Mission. I am sure many of us must be doing it to some extent, but it is like a drop in the ocean. Swamiji wanted the Mission to be a joint venture of the monastic and householder devotees. Let us go back to the history of the Mission. Where was the first meeting of the governing body of the Ramakrishna Mission Association held? Where were the weekly meetings held? At the residence of Balaram Babu or Girish Babu. Who were the executives (Secretary and Under-Secretary) nominated in the meeting? Mr. Mitra, Mr. Ghosh and Mr. Sarkar, and who were they? All of them

were householders. Swamiji's vision of a joint venture however did not work for one reason or the other, and the Mission has had to depend primarily on monastic members. While thinking about today's subject, several thoughts came to my mind; I shall try to express these by making the following suggestions:

The Mission is involved in multifarious activities and the monastic members being few in number, remain occupied and quite busy. Quite a few of the Mission's hospitals and educational institutions are in urgent need of doctors, teachers and workers. According to our qualification and vocation, in whatever field that may be, we can work as volunteers on part-time or full-time basis depending upon our convenience. Some of us may be able to take premature retirement after twenty years of work without losing eligibility for retirement benefits and help the Mission in its work on a full-time basis. Those of us who are holding a good position in various government bodies can help the Mission by getting its work done smoothly without undue delay. In Gujarat, the devotees of the Swaminarayan sect are known for their marvellous work done very efficiently and systematically. The scope and area of devotees' role in Mission may be varied in different centres. Each branch centre, depending upon their activities and work, can identify specific areas and tasks where devotees' help is needed. This can be publicized in advance either by placing them on a notice board at the centre, mailing pamphlets or letters, or through announcements in monthly journals. The schedule of work can be planned in consultation with the concerned devotees. At some centres, some arrangement of this sort is already in vogue informally. To give a concrete shape to this arrangement, and to make it work efficiently on a long-term basis, a committee can be formed at each branch centre consisting of monastic members and capable and committed devotees, where the role and respon-

sibilities of each member and the committee itself can be worked out. If we all agree to a larger and more meaningful devotees' role in this manner, the Mission headquarters may take the necessary policy decisions and encourage all branch centres to move in this direction.

The limited number of monastic members restricts the number of branch centres under the Mission. So, another major contribution is in the form of private centres run by devotees as per the ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission. My beloved Gurudeva, Revered Prabhu Maharaj, who emphasized the role of householder devotees and private centres in the cause of the Ramakrishna Movement, has said that what the Ramakrishna Mission has achieved is only microscopic and it needs to be expanded by participation of people from all strata of life. These private centres need to be encouraged and their work publicized. These models need to be replicated elsewhere. This can be done by frequently organizing separate conventions of devotee-run private centres where the ideas, approach and methods can be shared to increase the participation and the number of devotees. Belur Math can issue broad guidelines and provide support to these private centres so that they can do better work.

The third point is that we can encourage our children to work, after the completion of their studies, in the Mission or at a private centre for a couple of years depending upon their vocation and the needs of the centre. This exposure will definitely benefit the young member and the family, besides providing valuable assistance to the centre's work.

Some of our fellow devotees may feel disheartened by my suggestions thinking that they are unable to give professional or financial help to the Mission. But, my dear friends, all of us can certainly make an important contribution by engaging in *Bhāva-pracār*. There are so many occasions and

functions we celebrate in our society and families, like marriages, sacred-thread ceremonies, entrance and convocation functions in schools and colleges, birthday parties, and the like, when we give gifts in the form of toys, sarees, ornaments, etc. Along with that, why not make a gift of books like story books depicting the inspiring life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Ma Sarada to children, or Swamiji's books to students? I am sure some day someone will read them and get inspired. We can also start study circles and invite and encourage friends, neighbours, fellow-workers and family members to join in, which will eventually help them to become happy mentally and otherwise.

Another very important point relates to the unfortunate things we see around us such as corruption, lethargic work culture, rampant commercialization, consumerism, neglect of the poor, etc. The list is very long. We complain a lot and talk big; we are capable of making sound policies, programmes, and strategies, but all of us will agree that there is a wide gap between the desired objectives and the results. Why? There is something wrong with the MAN who is managing and implementing it. The remedy lies in Swamiji's ideas and ideals of 'man-making'. No matter whether we decide in favour of privatization or mixed economy, no matter which party comes to power at Delhi, no matter which policy we follow, unless we emphasize the ideal of man-making as envisaged by Swamiji, no effort will be fruitful. Man-making means the all-round development of the individual. Once the individuals are developed, we will be able to achieve the desired objectives and ideals in whatever field that may be. Swamiji wanted us to develop the heart to feel intensely for the misery of the poor, to develop the head to conceive ideas and formulate plans to reduce the misery, and to develop the will to make these ideas a reality at any cost. As true devotees of Swamiji, we have first to become

good men, real men by living a life of honesty and integrity. What are we doing as devotees? We advise our children and instruct our students and fellow-workers to live a simple life, to be tolerant, to be honest, etc., but all of us will agree that our children are smarter than us. Merely giving advice, instructions and lectures about moral values and talking about Swamiji and Sri Ramakrishna will not impress them. On the contrary, they get turned off and start developing an aversion to this moral and spiritual life when they observe in our lives just the opposite of what we preach. I do not blame them. I do not think the fault lies with our young ones but with us, parents, teachers, and elders in the society. We have failed to be a good role model they can look up to. I am reminded of an incident in New York about 20 years ago when some Indian parents approached Swami Adiswaranandaji, started complaining about their children coming under the influence of western culture, and requested the Swami to speak to them and to guide them regarding Indian culture, traditions, good behaviour, morality, etc. The swami strongly advised the parents to live a good life themselves and become role models. So, let us try to be role models at least to our children. This is in our own hands. Nobody can stop us from doing this; so we cannot blame anybody.

Now let me come to my last suggestion. Some of you who had attended the 1980 Convention may remember the point made so well by our late Swami Atmanandaji Maharaj about permitting our children to join the Mission. To those of our children who want to dedicate their life, who have heard the call of the Spirit and are ready to embrace the life of renunciation and service, please do not become a hindrance or obstruction, and, if possible, encourage, guide and support them wholeheartedly. It is a mockery to wish and request the Mission to establish new centres in our area if we are not ready to contribute what is ours. Good and capable

monks and nuns do not drop from the sky, but come from the families that are morally and ethically strong, sound, and healthy. I would like to quote from Swami Ambikanandaji's reminiscences: '...My parents were devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and often visited him at Dakshineswar. During her pregnancy, my mother decided that if a son was born to her, she would dedicate him to the service of Sri Ramakrishna. Through the grace of the Lord, I was the son born to her. She resolved to keep her promise. One day, when I was a few weeks old, my mother carried me snugly bundled up in a sheet to Dakshineswar. My father accompanied us. Sri Ramakrishna, in an ecstatic mood, was standing alone. As soon as he saw my parents, he said to my mother, "Hello, what have you brought for me?" Mother placed me at the feet of the Master and replied, "I have brought you this offering." Sri Ramakrishna looked at me for a few moments and remarked, "Ah! What a nice child! Are you offering it to me? Good!" He took me on his

lap, put his right palm on my head as a blessing, and then placed me back in my mother's arms saying, "Take care of this child now, but I know that he belongs to me. In due time I will take him back." Years later, when I joined the Ramakrishna Monastery, my mother was the happiest of all, for she felt that Sri Ramakrishna had accepted me.'

I hope that listening to this all of us, especially the women devotees who are mothers, will be inspired and ready to offer their best to the cause of the Mission. Let us not miss the opportunity that the Lord has given us. It is a great privilege to be a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, Ma Sarada and Swamiji. All of us should be proud of what we have accomplished in these hundred years, but we have to do a lot more. Let us pray to Sri Ramakrishna, Ma Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda to bless us, to give us the strength and courage to become their true instruments and to discharge the responsibility they have placed on our shoulders, to the best of our abilities. □

Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad

(Continued from page 434)

mortal; the rest of the universe, the superimposition, is transient, perishable, however long it may exist. For, objects in the world are in the domain of *māyā*. So, verily the only *amṛta vastu* (immortal Essence) here is Brahman. The teacher is no longer using the term Atman which was used in the subjective approach. Now the objective approach is adopted and the term Brahman is used. He as it were asks the pupil, 'Where do you like to see Brahman?' As He is the essence of the universe, you will see Him everywhere. If you want to know where to find Him, then know that He is in front of you, behind you, also on your right and on your left. He is below you and also above you. Thus the

teacher expresses the idea that Brahman is omnipresent, is everywhere; so He is also within you. The Yoga-sutra says that you conceive Brahman as all around you and within you, only your awareness of individuality, *jīvatva*, is sticking out like a sore thumb. So, get rid of that feeling of separate individuality and that moment you are free.

The very first question asked by the student, Śaunaka, was, 'Knowing what is all this known?' The teacher answers, 'If you know Brahman within yourself, then everything becomes known, for everything indeed is Brahman.'

(to be continued)

साधनगीता Gita for Spiritual Practice

साधनप्रकाशिकासहिता With an Exegesis on Spiritual Practice

(Continued from the previous issue)

DR. B.R. PHANI KUMAR

अथ कर्मयोगः

जननमरणबीजभूताविद्याकल्पिताहंकारप्रेरितानां कर्मणां फलेषु सक्तस्य लोकस्य श्रेयश्चिकीर्षुः श्रीभगवानुवाच—
Yoga of Work

The Blessed Lord, desirous of doing good to the world entangled in the fruits of actions performed by being impelled by ego superimposed by ignorance—the root cause of birth and death—, said:

१. कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥ (२.४७)

1. To work alone you have the right and never to the fruits thereof. Be not impelled by the fruits of actions; nor be attached to inaction.

कर्मणि यथाप्राप्ते शास्त्रविहिते युद्धादावेव अधिकारः ते तव ज्ञानोत्पत्तेः प्राक्। मा फलेषु कर्मफलेषु स्वर्गादिषु कदाचन। नियतं कर्म कुर्वन् त्वं तत्फले सक्तिं मा कार्षीः। एतत् कर्म कृत्वा एतत् फलं भुञ्जीयेति बुद्धिमादावेव त्यज। कर्तव्यकरण एव मे प्रवृत्तिरस्तु, न तु तत्फलचिन्तने, इति दृढनिश्चयो भूत्वा असङ्गस्सन् प्रवर्तस्वेत्यर्थः। मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूः। कर्मणः फलं कर्मफलं जन्म। यदि कर्मफलं काङ्क्षसे कर्मफलभूतजन्मनः दुःखात्मकस्य हेतुः भविष्यसि। अतः कर्मफले स्पृहा माऽस्तु ते। यदि कर्मफलाकाङ्क्षा न कर्तव्या तर्हि दुःखरूपं कर्म न करोम्येव। निर्व्यापार एव तिष्ठामीति बुद्धिरपि ते माऽस्त्विति वारयति भगवान्। मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि। कर्तव्याकरणे सङ्गः माऽस्तु ते। यतः त्वया अज्ञेन अधिकृतेन प्रागात्मज्ञानात् कर्म कर्तव्यमेव।

Before the dawn of knowledge, you have only the right to actions like battle etc. accruing in whatever manner and enjoined by scriptures, and never to the fruits of actions such as heaven etc. While performing the relevant actions, do not develop attachment to their fruits. Even before beginning any action, renounce the idea, 'After performing this action, I will enjoy its fruit'. The meaning is that you should be detached and act with the firm resolve, 'Let my inclination be towards doing the duty, but not towards thinking of its fruit'. Do not be the cause of the fruit of action. The fruit of action is birth. If you desire it, you will become the cause of (your) rebirth, which is the source of misery. Therefore, do not long for the fruit of action. The Lord discourages the idea, 'If there should be no desire for the fruit of action, then I will not at all perform painful work, but remain passive'. Be not attached to inaction. For you, let there be no attachment to non-performance of duty. Because, prior to the (arising of the) Knowledge of the Self, you have to perform work, being ignorant and entitled to work (alone and not to Knowledge). (2.47)

कर्मफलेषु अकर्मणि चासक्तबुद्धिना कथं कर्म कर्तव्यमित्युच्यते—

It is being stated as to how work should be done by one whose intellect is unattached

to the fruits of action and also to inaction—

२. योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय।

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते॥ (२.४८)

2. O Arjuna! Perform actions being established in Yoga, giving up attachment and remaining equanimous in success and failure; equanimity is called Yoga.

योगस्थः योगो नाम कर्मफललाभालाभयोः हर्षशोकरूपमनोवृत्तिराहित्यम्। अतः विगतस्पृहो भूत्वा कुरु कर्माणि कर्मफले सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय। सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः ज्ञानप्राप्त्यप्राप्त्योः समः तुल्यो भूत्वा कुरु कर्माणि। यदि योगारूढचेतस्तया निस्सङ्गः कर्म कुर्यात् तर्हि ज्ञानी भवेयमित्येतामपि बुद्धिं कर्मरम्भपूर्वमेव त्यक्त्वा कुरु कर्माणीत्यर्थः। एतदेव समत्वं सिद्ध्यसिद्धिपूर्वकमनोविकाराभावः योग उच्यते।

Yoga means absence of mental modifications like joy and sorrow in gain and loss of result of action. Therefore, O Arjuna, being desireless and renouncing attachment to fruit of action, perform works. Being equanimous in success and failure, that is, in gain and loss of Knowledge, perform works. This is the meaning: Perform work, but before the beginning of any action itself, renounce even the idea, 'If I perform works being detached and with a mind established in Yoga, I will become the Knower of the Self'. This very equanimity, the absence of mental modifications regarding success and failure, is called Yoga. (2.48)

योगस्थः कर्मफलेष्वनासक्तबुद्धिः कर्म कुर्वन् क्रमेण ज्ञानी कृतकृत्यश्च भवति—

He who is established in Yoga with his intellect detached from the fruits of actions gradually becomes a Knower (of the Self) and becomes one who has done all his duties—

३. तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर।

असक्तो ह्याचरन् कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः॥ (३.१९)

3. Therefore, being detached, always perform the action to be done; verily, by performing actions being unattached, man attains the highest.

तस्माद् ज्ञानप्राप्तये असक्तः कर्मफले सङ्गरहितः सन् सततं निरन्तरं कार्यं कृत्यं कर्म समाचर निर्वर्तय। असक्तो हि यस्माद् आचरन् कर्म परं मोक्षाख्यं स्थानं आप्नोति पूरुषः।

Therefore, for the attainment of Knowledge, always, at all times, perform the work to be done, in a detached manner, that is, by being detached from the fruit of action. Because a person attains the Highest Abode called Liberation by performing action in a detached way. (3.19)

फलाभिसन्धिवर्जितस्सन्नुदासीनवदाचरतः कर्म अकर्मैव संपद्यते इति दर्शयति—

The Lord shows that for one who, being devoid of the desire for fruit of action, acts in an indifferent manner, actions becomes inaction—

४. त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः।

कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः॥ (४.२०)

4. Renouncing the attachment to fruit of action, ever contented and without any refuge, he does not do anything, though verily engaged in action.

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं कर्मफलप्राप्त्यभिमानं नित्यतृप्तः सर्वभोगत्यागादीच्छारहितः अत एव निराश्रयः। यो हि भोगान् काङ्क्षते स विषयानपेक्षते दृश्यप्रपञ्चं च भोगसाधनमाश्रयति। अयं तु परमात्मदर्शी सर्वकर्मफलाकाङ्क्षाभावात् आत्मन्येव संजातसंतृप्तिः। अत एव कुतश्चिद्धेतोः कर्मणि इहामुत्रफलसाधने अभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि कर्म कुर्वन्नपीत्यर्थः। नैव किञ्चित् अपि कर्म करोति सः। लोकवत् कर्माणि कुर्वाणो दृश्यते किंतु वस्तुतस्त्वयं निष्कर्मा समुत्पन्नात्मदर्शनात्।

Renouncing the attachment to fruit of action, that is, the desire to obtain the fruit of action, he who is ever contented, devoid of wish, having renounced all pleasures and who,

therefore, is without any refuge, does nothing. He who desires pleasures, requires objects of the senses and resorts to the external world, which is the means to pleasures. But this one (under discussion) is a Knower of the Supreme Self, and is contented in the Self because of the absence of desire for the fruit of all actions. Therefore, he does not perform even the least work, though, for any reason, he is engaged in action which is a means to results here and hereafter. He appears to perform actions like people of the world but, in reality, he is devoid of all action, having obtained the vision of the Self. (4.20)

कर्मफलाकाङ्क्षैव बन्धहेतुः। तया विमुक्तचित्तः वीतरागः समबुद्धिः कर्म कुर्वन्नपि कथं विमुच्यत इत्युच्यते—

Desire for fruit of action alone is the cause of bondage. It is being stated as to how an equanimous man freed from that desire and devoid of attachment is liberated, though engaged in action—

५. यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वाऽपि न निबध्यते॥ (४.२२)

5. *Contented with whatever is gained by chance, transcending duality, free from jealousy, same in success and failure, such a one is not bound, though performing actions.*

यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो जीवनादिविषये अप्रार्थितया संप्राप्तो लाभः यदृच्छालाभः। तेनैव सन्तुष्टः रागवर्जित एवौदासीन्येन तं स्वीकरोति। तदतिरिक्तं किमपि न काङ्क्षत इत्यर्थः। द्वन्द्वातीतः शीतोष्णसुखदुःखरागद्वेषमानापमानप्रियाप्रियनिन्दास्तुतिशत्रुमित्रादिद्वन्द्वभावेन न पीड्यत इत्यर्थः। विमत्सरः ईर्ष्यारहितः। समः तुल्यः विक्रियारहितः कर्मफलस्य सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वाऽपि कर्माणि विविधानि न निबध्यते तेषां फलरूपैः बन्धनैः न बध्यते फलाकाङ्क्षाभावात्।

‘Whatever is gained by chance’ means that which is gained unasked in matters of livelihood, etc. He is contented even with that. The meaning is, he accepts it with indifference, without any attachment. He does not desire anything other than that. He is not tormented by dualities like cold and heat, happiness and misery, attachment and hatred, honour and dishonour, likes and dislikes, praise and blame, foe and friend, etc. He, who is free from jealousy, devoid of envy, and equanimous, that is, without any mental modification regarding the attainment or non-attainment of the fruits of actions, is not bound by the bonds of results of actions. Though doing different types of actions, he is not bound because of the absence of desire for result. (4.22)

एवं कर्मबन्धनैर्विमुक्तस्य ज्ञानिनः कर्मनाशं दर्शयति—

The Lord now shows the destruction of all actions in the case of a Knower who is thus free from the ties of actions—

६. गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः।

यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते॥ (४.२३)

6. *Entire action melts away for one who is devoid of attachment, free and whose mind is established in Knowledge and who performs work as a sacrifice (for the Lord).*

गतसङ्गस्य गतः विगतः सङ्गः सर्वत्र देहादिबाह्यप्रपञ्चे मनआद्यान्तरप्रपञ्चे च यस्य स गतसङ्गः तस्य। मुक्तस्य सर्वबन्धनैर्विमुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ज्ञान अवस्थितं सम्यगास्थापितमज्ञाननिवर्तकेन निरन्तरस्वस्वरूपचिन्तनेन चेतः यस्य स ज्ञानावस्थितचेताः तस्य यज्ञाय यज्ञार्थं लोकसंग्रहार्थमिति यावत् आचरतः कुर्वतः कर्म समग्रं कृत्स्नं प्रविलीयते प्रणाशं गच्छति।

He is devoid of attachment, that is, his attachment to both the external world like body, etc. and the internal world like mind, etc. is destroyed. For him who is free from all bonds, whose mind is well established in Knowledge by constant contemplation on his real nature

which removes ignorance and who performs work as a sacrifice, that is, for the good of the world, entire action melts away, is destroyed. (4.23)

एवं त्यक्तसर्वकर्मफलाभिसन्धिस्सन्—

Thus being a renouncer of the fruits of all actions—

७. ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा॥ (५.१०)

7. *He who performs works consecrating them to Supreme Brahman and giving up attachment, is not touched by sin even as a lotus petal by water.*

ब्रह्मणि सर्वात्मनि सर्वकर्मप्रवृत्तिहेतौ आधाय निक्षिप्य समर्प्य कर्माणि सर्वाणि तत्फलेषु सङ्गं काङ्क्षां त्यक्त्वा विहाय एतानि सर्वाण्यपि कर्माणि परमेश्वरस्यैव न ममेति बुद्ध्या करोति यः लिप्यते न सः नैव सम्बध्यते पापेन फलाभिसन्धिरूपेण पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा जलेन।

He who works with the conviction, 'All these are Lord's works and not mine', consecrating, dedicating all the works to Brahman which is the Self of all and is the cause of origination of all works, and renouncing desire for and attachment to their fruits, is not touched by the sin of desire for fruit even as a lotus petal is not touched by water. (5.10)

इदानीं कर्मफलतृष्णारहितः नित्यं कर्म कुर्वन्नपि संन्यासी योगी च भवितुमर्हतीत्येतमर्थं दिदर्शयिषुराह—

Now, wishing to show that he who is devoid of desire for fruit of action is both a renouncer (sannyasi) and a detached worker (yogi) though he always performs action, the Lord says—

८. अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः।

स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः॥ (६.१)

8. *He who performs the prescribed work renouncing its fruit is a sannyasi and a yogi, and not he who is without the sacred fire and without works.*

अनाश्रितः न आश्रितः नाश्रयति न काङ्क्षते कर्मफलं कर्मणः फलं सर्वकर्मणामीश्वरे समर्पितत्वात् कार्यं कर्तव्यं कर्म करोति यः स संन्यासी परित्यागी कर्मफलत्यागात् च योगी समाहितचित्तश्च। कर्मफलेषु ह्यव्यापृतचित्तस्य चित्तमाशु समाधीयते नान्यस्य केवलकर्मत्यागिनोऽपीत्येतमर्थमाविष्कुर्वन्नाह। न निरग्निः ज्ञानाधिकारप्राप्तेः प्रागेव त्यक्ताग्निः। न चाक्रियः संन्यस्ताखिलक्रियः संन्यासी वा योगी वा भवितुमर्हतीत्यर्थः। ज्ञानरहितः केवलकर्मसंन्यासादेव सिद्धिं प्रेप्सुः कर्माणि परित्यज्य कर्मयोगोपेयभूतसत्त्वसुद्धिमप्राप्य संन्यासी वा योगी वा न भवतीत्यर्थः।

He who performs the prescribed duty, dedicating the fruits of all actions to the Lord, does not depend on, does not desire, the fruit of action, and, by virtue of renunciation of fruit of action becomes a sannyasi, a renouncer, and a yogi, a man of concentrated mind. Verily, it is the mind of one who does not desire the fruits of actions that is concentrated, and not of one who is a mere renouncer of actions. Revealing this meaning, the Lord says: He who renounces the sacred fire and all actions even before attaining the eligibility for Knowledge, cannot become either a sannyasi or a yogi. The meaning is that one without the Knowledge of the Self but desirous of attaining Perfection through mere renunciation of actions renounces them and does not acquire purity of mind to which Karma Yoga is the means. Hence (being without the necessary purity of mind), he cannot become either a sannyasi or a yogi. (6.1)

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागी त्यागसंप्राप्तमनस्समाधिमत्त्वादिष्टानिष्टयोः कर्मणोः रागद्वेषरहितो भवति अतः—

Because of the concentration of mind attained by renunciation, the renouncer of the fruits of actions becomes free from attachment to agreeable work and hatred for disagreeable

work. Therefore—

९. न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते।

त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः॥ (१८.१०)

9. *The renouncer (of the fruits of actions), who is established in sattva, wise, and whose doubts are dispelled, neither hates disagreeable work nor is attached to agreeable work.*

न द्वेष्टि न निन्दति अकुशलं अनिष्टं दुःखरूपफलात्मकं कर्म एवं कुशले इष्टे आत्मनो मुदावहे कर्मणि नानुषज्जते अनुषङ्गं रागं न करोति फलाकाङ्क्षाभावात्। यो हि कर्मफलं काङ्क्षते स रागद्वेषाभ्यामभिभूयमानो विक्षिप्तचित्तो दृश्यते। अयं तु त्यागी कर्मफलस्य। अत एव कर्मफलत्यागोपमर्दितरागद्वेषादिद्वन्द्वभावस्सन् समबुद्ध्या प्रवर्तते। समबुद्धिहेतोरेव सत्त्वसमाविष्टः ज्ञानोपायभूतसत्त्वगुणसंपन्नः। अतः मेधावी ज्ञानी। अतश्छिन्नसंशयो विनष्टसर्वसंशयश्च।

Because of the absence of desire for results, the renouncer (of fruits of actions) does not hate disagreeable, detestable, work which produces misery and similarly does not get attached to, does not show love for, work that brings him happiness. Verily, he who desires fruit of action is overpowered by attachment and hatred and is (therefore) of agitated mind. But this one (under consideration) is a renouncer of the fruit of action. Therefore, he acts with a steady intellect, being one in whom the pairs of opposite qualities like attachment and hatred etc. are destroyed through renunciation of fruit of action. Because of steady intellect, he is established in sattva, endowed with the quality of sattva, which is a means to Knowledge. Therefore, he is wise, a Knower (of the Self) and thus has all his doubts dispelled, destroyed. (18.10)

सत्त्वगुणसंपन्नस्यैव ज्ञानं सुसंपाद्यं भवति। सा च सत्त्वसंपत् सत्त्वप्रधानानि कर्माणि सेवमानस्यैव सुकरा। अतः सात्त्विकं कर्म राजसतामसकर्मभ्यां पृथक्कृत्य तस्य लक्षणप्रतिपिपादयिषया निर्दिशति मुमुक्षवः तस्मिन्नेव सात्त्विके कर्मणि प्रवर्तेरन्नितराभ्यां च निवर्तेरन्निति—

Knowledge is easily attained only by one who is possessed with the quality of sattva. The treasure of sattva can be easily achieved, verily, by one who performs works promoting predominance of sattva. Therefore, the Lord, separating the sattvika work from those of rajasika and tamasika, declares the following with a view to establishing the characteristics of sattvika work so that spiritual aspirants tend only to do sattvika work and desist from the works of rajasika and tamasika nature—

१०. नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम्।

अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते॥ (१८.२३)

10. *The prescribed work done without attachment, love and hatred, by one not desiring its fruit, is called sattvika.*

नियतं शास्त्रोपदिष्टं सङ्गरहितं कर्मफलतृष्णारहितं अरागद्वेषतः कृतं रागद्वेषाभ्यामविचाल्यमानचित्ततया कृतं अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्मफलकाङ्क्षावर्जितेन नाहं फलाय करोमि किंतु कर्तव्यमित्येव करोमि परमेश्वरस्य भृत्यवदित्येवंबुद्धिमता पुरुषेण कर्म यत् तत् सात्त्विकं सत्त्वप्रधानमुच्यते।

That work is called sattvika, that is, having predominance of sattva, which is ordained by scriptures, performed without attachment to, desire for, the fruit of action and without love or hatred, that is, with a mind unmoved by love or hatred, by one not desiring its fruit, by one who performs with the thought, 'I do not work for the result, but, I do it only because it ought to be done, and I do it as a servant of the Lord'. (18.23)

(to be continued)

From Uncharted Depths

MAHESH ADVANI

The author, of Mumbai, spent a few days at Mayavati in 1997. It was the monsoon season, and the venue for the inspiration, the front part of the guest house.

An unlived life
An unknown Self;
Unheard whispers of wisdom down the centuries of time—
Misused incarnations—
Waste-despair-desolation-loneliness
O, How my soul wandered groping in the darkness.
Still I searched on relentlessly.
In hope one day salvation would come.
Prophets promised heaven,
They threatened hell—
Perhaps I was damned eternally?
Helplessness crept in—took over—
Till it almost mattered no more.
Then suddenly a spark!
There is hope yet!!
In an emerald green wonderland.¹
A sacred immersion²
A joyful reunion with a long-forgotten Self;
And the world around me sings in celebration.
I hear Shiva beckon—clear as a clarion call.
A strange dance begins in my soul.
The birds sing the tune,
The wind whispers love
While pattering raindrops purify the natural melody.
An entire orchestra seems to join in;
With increasing gusto the song rises
And falls to a divine rhythm.
Then the Sun emerges.
A serene reflection reveals
That where I've been
Is deep into my soul and
That which I've seen
Is Truth—stark and bare—,
Beyond beauty and pain,
And left me hungering
To meditate again. □

1. 'Emerald green wonderland' refers to the scenery in front of the guest house at Mayavati which in sunshine looks like a green emerald.

2. Meditation.

Ramakrishna Math and the Youth

A DIALOGUE WITH SWAMI PARAMARTHANANDA

In the following dialogue, which took place on the morning of 15 August 1997, Swami Paramarthananda, President, Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, recounts that the Math devotes a greater part of its time and service for awakening the youth with the faith and belief that they will grow to become ideally enlightened citizens and that they will channelize their energies in constructive ways, so that 'all may realize what is good and none may be subject to misery'.

Gopi: Pranam, Maharaj.

Swami: Welcome, Gopi! How are you? It is nice to meet you on this great day when the whole nation is celebrating its golden jubilee of Independence.

Gopi: Thank you, Maharaj. It is indeed a great day, remembering the great achievement attained through great sacrifices. I think the essence of such celebrations is more to remind the youth about the great sacrifices that led to the Independence than an expression of the happiness for attaining it.

Swami: You are right. Such reminders will help the youth realize the value of freedom and lead their lives as worthy citizens.

Just this morning we had a function on our Math premises here, under the auspices of Vivekananda Institute of Languages. Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, senior Vice-President of the Order, unfurled the tri-clour and addressed the students who had assembled on the occasion. Really it is amazing that even at his advanced age he is so energetic and enthusiastic when it comes to national good, national awakening, and spread of Swami Vivekananda's message. Swami Ranganathanandaji stressed that the national youth force should be motivated and channelized in constructive ways, so that the nation might not fall behind during the twenty-first century. He exhorted the youth to imbibe the spirit of freedom which our forefathers who fought for India's free-

dom got from Swami Vivekananda.

Gopi: Maharaj, do you think that our youth will make the right response to the clarion call of Swami Vivekananda? I see negative thinking and pessimism are rampant among the youth.

Swami: Gopi, these are all passing phases. Swami Vivekananda himself foresaw this when he said, 'India will attain to great heights shortly, but with what tumults! with what tumults!' Now our country is passing through this tumultuous period. Fifty years of Independence is nothing in the history of a nation. There are countries which are celebrating centenaries and bi-centenaries; but still we do not find much inspiration in those people. Ours is a vibrant nation with tremendous energy, soaked in great ideas and ideals, and that they get in plenty in Swami Vivekananda's utterances. 'My hope lies in the younger generation: they are the future carriers of my ideas,' Swami Vivekananda had said.

This tremendous zeal in the youth we experience when we talk to them in various educational institutions, universities, etc. The youth is quite responsive. They *want* an ideal that is practical and can be implemented with inspiration from those who practise it, who live it. But where are such men? This is the problem our country is facing today. Swami Vivekananda said, 'Men are wanted; everything else will be ready.'

Gopi: Maharaj, do you do anything that is meant specially for the youth?

Swami: Of course, yes. The Ramakrishna Math at Hyderabad runs an Institute of Languages and a Vivekananda Study Circle, the latter a forum for the youth in the age group of 18 to 30 years. The purpose is to present before our youth an ideal that can be emulated and to channelize their energies along constructive lines.

Gopi: Maharaj, I am interested to know more about your interactions with the youth in the Study Circle.

Swami: Well, we have two types of programmes for the youth (both boys and girls). One is for the grown-ups in the age group of 18-30 years, and the other is for boys and girls in the age group of 8-15 years.

First let me explain to you the purpose of the Youth Forum, Vivekananda Study Circle. Every Sunday about 200 youth assemble on the Math premises to participate in the following programme:

- 9.00 - 9.30 a.m. Yogasana under the guidance of an expert teacher.
- 9.30 - 10.00 a.m. Hymn and Vedic chanting.
- 10.00 - 10.30 a.m. Instruction on meditation followed by meditation.
- 10.30 - 11.15 a.m. Study of any book by Swami Vivekananda followed by a lively discussion.

At 11.15 a.m., all of them are given a piece of sweet before they disperse.

Apart from this regular feature, the youth involve themselves in various social and cultural activities of the Math, like participating in spiritual retreats, *Punyabhumi* programmes, relief activities, and service activities in slums, hospitals, etc.

Gopi: What is the motive force, Maharaj, for them to actively take part in such activities?

Swami: Gopi, money, power, position, etc. can never motivate the youth. They study

the lives of great people and get the inspiration—and our best guide is Swami Vivekananda. Even the Government of India, while declaring 12 January as National Youth Day, explained that Swami Vivekananda's life and message can be a tremendous force for awakening the energy dormant in the youth; hence his birthday is being observed as National Youth Day.

In our Study Circle, we try to inculcate the values preached by Swami Vivekananda: renunciation, selfless service, national spirit, patriotism, dedication, etc. The monks try their best to exemplify these values through their lives and works. And by observing these values, without these being forced upon them, the youth shape their lives effortlessly.

Gopi: Maharaj, how do you measure the spread of these virtues among the youth of the Study Circle?

Swami: Well, after working with the youth for a few years, one can easily understand their pulse. Permit me to say, I was myself one who was inspired by my association with the monks of the Ramakrishna Order when I was a member of Vivekananda Balaka Sangha—a cultural and spiritual centre for boys—run by our Ramakrishna Math at Bangalore. I was brought into the ambits of this inspiring and life-giving message of the Holy Trio—Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda—from the age of ten years. Slowly but steadily, this had its sublime influence on my life and character.

We cannot but say that some of our efforts at least yield tangible results. To give you a few examples:

One young man, who was a member of the Study Circle but later had to discontinue because of family problems, wrote a very touching letter after several years from Jamshedpur, where he was working. He said in that letter that the benefits and the inspiration that he had received during his association with the Vivek-

ananda Study Circle have left a lasting impact on his life and character. He also attached a cheque for Rs. 500/- as his humble contribution to the Math's activities.

Another young man, who has become a leading engineer in the U.S.A., expressed similar sentiments in his letter to the Math. Married and now settled down there, he feels that whatever he has and is today is because of his contact with the Mission. He also enclosed a cheque for U.S. \$ 2000/-

Yet another young man, who is working as a medical representative in Kakinada, a town in Andhra Pradesh, is seriously planning to renounce his worldly ties and join the Ramakrishna Order. He also sent in a contribution of Rs. 1116/-.

Already some young men have become members of the Order. All these give us the certainty of conviction that the youth can be moulded, only we should know *how* to guide and enthuse the youth force.

Gopi: Maharaj, what about the other activities you were mentioning for the children?

Swami: Yes. That is more important than the youth activities, and that is why I kept it to the last. You see, the age group of 8 - 15 years is very crucial. That is the most impressionable age. Human mind is then fresh, not jaded. Whatever is imprinted on the mind at this tender age will stick to the consciousness and subtly exert its influence throughout the life.

In Hyderabad every summer it is a joy to see more than three hundred children, both boys and girls, coming day after day for nearly forty days to practise *yogasana*, to sing in the temple, to attend classes and listen to stories from various teachers, to enjoy snacks, to participate in competitions in painting, story-telling, elocution, recitation, display fancy dress, etc. and to speak without fear, facing an audience numbering over one thousand! Don't you think that all these

things will have a positive effect on a young mind?

Gopi: When I hear all these, Maharaj, I get a desire to live my youth over again. How lucky these boys and girls are!

Swami: Gopi, not only the children but also their parents derive benefit from such programmes. On the valedictory day, we feel so happy to listen to parents expressing their great sense of gratitude for all the benefit their children received through these activities. They become great friends and devotees of the Math and help it in various ways.

Revered Yatishwaranandaji Maharaj, a senior Vice-President of the Order—he is no more now—used to say to elderly devotees who approached him, 'I am not much interested in you, nor in your son, but I am interested in your grandson. I can mould something out of him—give him to me.' Well, we were all moulded in this way under his profound spiritual influence. Many of us joined as monks of the Ramakrishna Order at that time, and are now holding very responsible positions and serving the society.

Gopi: Then, Maharaj, is the purpose of the Study Circle to recruit monks and nuns?

Swami: No, no, not at all. Our main goal and purpose is to train our youth as ideal citizens of our great nation. To become a monk or a nun is not in our hands. Only those who are selected by the Lord can be blessed by such a life. We strive our best to inspire the youth to dedicate themselves to the cause of the nation and to exert their influence in their own limited way to bring about an improvement in the national character of our country. We see pessimism, corruption, violence, selfishness, and many such social evils all around us. They are all due to want of noble ideals. We try to place before our youth such an ideal. Wherever they may be, whatever they may do, they should be ideally enlightened citizens, as Revered Ranganathanandaji reiterates in his

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PROF. KUMAR MEHTA*(President, A.H.I.M.S.A. and Professor Emeritus, Civil Engineering)*

On behalf of the AHIMSA* Foundation as well as the members of our advisory board, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our third annual conference.

Today, of all the problems confronting our society, none is more disturbing than rising youth violence. According to a recent report, juvenile crime rate will more than double in the next fifteen years. This is disturbing indeed because among the living beings only humans possess the ability to manifest either animal behaviour or God-like behaviour. It was 2500 years ago when Lord Buddha said that right action can come only from right knowledge. It seems therefore that the increasing crime in society must come from a fault in knowledge, or faulty education, which somehow promotes violent behaviour.

Only two months ago at a conference on character education in high school, Boston College psychologist Wilson Kilpatrick said, 'The core problem facing the schools is a moral one. All other problems derive from it. Various attempts at school reform are not likely to succeed until character education is put at the top of the agenda. There is some controversy whether values should be taught in schools. However, due to a signifi-

cant breakdown in the family structure and social structure in the United States, it is generally being accepted now that values for character building ought to be taught in schools. But the question is, which values and whose values? In a democratic society where people are free to belong to any religion and hold any value system, it is impossible to get an agreement on the values to be taught. Obviously a solution to the problem is a universal value system based not on any particular doctrine or faith, but on human spirit. One hundred years ago, in December 1895 on a Saturday morning like this, a young spiritual teacher from India, Swami Vivekananda, speaking on the role of spirituality in education taught to a small class of students in New York that every human being has a divine spark within, which is the source of all virtue and good. The goal of education should be to manifest this divinity within in everyday life. This is the whole of religion, or the essence of religion. Dogmas, doctrines, books, rituals and temples are of secondary importance.

Today, education owes it to society to re-discover such eternal truths and incorporate them into our modern educational curriculum. This is my personal view and like all of you I look forward to hearing the thoughts of the many eminent persons who are assembled to speak to us on this subject. □

* AHIMSA is the acronym for Agency for Human Interconnectedness through Manifestation of Spiritual Awareness.

Follies there are, weakness there must be, but remember your real nature always—that is the only way to cure the weakness, that is the only way to cure the follies.

—Swami Vivekananda

The Hindu View of the Purpose of Education

(A four-minute panel talk)

SWAMI PRABUDDHANANDA

Swami Prabuddhananda is the spiritual leader of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, U.S.A.

Friends,

What is education for? The answer is simple according to Hindu Views. When we talk of violence, and we speak of immorality and all such vices, we understand that all these are due to only one cause. That cause (to be plain and candid) is that we are just dumb. Ignorance does not mean just no knowledge. It is not that; that is only half the story. We *know* a little bit, we *don't know* a little bit. This twilight existence—neither being in darkness nor in light—, that is our usual average life. In that condition we get confused. A sort of intoxication comes to us—a sort of stupor or hypnosis, something inexplicable comes over us which is the cause for that condition. The word we use for that is ignorance.

Ignorance is then the cause of all our problems, whether they be secular or spiritual or psychological. So the remedy for that is education. Education does everything to correct that situation of ours. Through education, secular or spiritual, lies the way out of darkness.

And what about the method used to impart that education? It is a very human method and it should be taught in homes, in schools, in churches, and everywhere. It is simply this: All of us have been endowed with the capacity to think and to reason. So the way for us is to just *use these*. Universities are there to train us in the process of what

we call *vicāra*, or probing into things. Inquire everywhere. Inquire into things. Whoever it is, whatever it is—whether it is a scripture, or a teacher, or a religion, your own life or your wife's life, or children's life, or the university professor's—whoever or whatever it concerns, develop this capacity to inquire and probe honestly. This is the capacity which our universities have to provide or open up in the lives of students. And then there will be hope. There is hope for everyone because this capacity is not to be manufactured in the university. A professor is not required to produce it or make it and give it to the student. It is already there. It is already there *within* us and we have only to open our eyes to this inner ability of ours.

What should a university do? A university should be an eye-opener—*that's all*. A professor is an eye-opener—*that's all*. Therein is the hope because each one of us, however degraded one may be, however violent one may be, has this capacity—the capacity to inquire, the capacity to probe. Gradually, the so-called virtues will become manifest. They are already there in us. You don't have to acquire them. That is what Hinduism tells us. You don't have to acquire them from somewhere like acquiring a Ph.D. It is not like that. It is within every one of us, already there, shining all the time. So we have to open our eyes to that. *Do just that job!*

Another problem in our life, whether it be our religious life or educational life or secular life, is just this—We can't let go of things. We hang on to things with a strong sense of possession. We say *my* religion, *my* scripture, *my* teacher; and all this hanging on to things is our great problem. The basic problem is this attachment. You 'stick' as they say about the crazy-glue. *My* Hinduism, *my* Christianity, *my* University of California, *my* civil engineering, *my* monastery, *my* monkhood. In everything it is the same with us.

So what Hinduism says is this: All these have to be kept at a little distance. As mod-

ern psychologists call it: 'self-distancing'. You distance yourself from *everything*, however good it may be, however noble it may be, however bad it may be. Handle things with a little distancing. Then you will see things properly, you will do so well.

These are the two things I wanted to say. One is *vicāra*, or the probing, reasoning, reflecting; and the other is this detachment—positive detachment. It is a very good tool that all of us should have. These two characteristics, or virtues, have to be developed in everyone. They are all embedded in every one. We have to wake up to that. □

Sri Guru Granth Sahib

(Continued from page 444)

Due to certain limitations, the message enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* could not spread throughout the world, though it has a universal appeal. Some efforts have been made to translate this scripture to other languages by Macauliffe and UNESCO. The saints of the *Guru Granth Sahib* are worshipped by devotees in many parts of India. There is an urgent need to make the devotees aware that the bonds of love, unity, service and devotion are their common heritage.

The world is burning and it must be saved by being brought to the domain of love and brotherhood. The third Guru, Guru Amar Dass, prayed, 'O Lord, save the burning world by Thy grace. Save it through any manner.' (Shalok Mohalla III, Bilwal Ki Var).

The relevance of the *Granth Sahib*, according to Dr. Taran Singh, lies in the fact that:

The idea of Guru Arjan Dev was to establish the fundamental unity of all religions and mystic experiences. It was, so to say, an integral congress of minds and souls, operating on the same spiri-

tual beam. To have thus elevated the songs of the Bhaktas, the Sufis and the Bhattas to the status of the logos was to salute the power of the Word whatever form it might take to reveal the glory of God. This was done at a time when the caste system in India had almost paralysed the conscience of man. It is indeed a magnificent compendium of the religious mystics and metaphysical poetry written or uttered between 12th and 17th centuries in different parts of India. It is at the same time a mirror of the sociological, economic and political conditions of the day.⁹

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a precious spiritual gift of India, particularly of the Punjab, to the world. It is a pride of the entire mankind, an embodiment of love and brotherhood. May this Holy Scripture inspire the seekers of God everywhere, irrespective of the path they adopt in their spiritual quest. □

9. Dr. Taran Singh, *Guru Granth Ratnavali*, pp. 28-9.

Synopsis of Question-Answer Session

(Youth Convention held at Sri Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora,
on 14 and 15 May 1997 for boys and girls respectively)

SWAMI NIKHILESWARANANDA*

Q. *How can I be serious?* (Ms. Mallika Saha, a student of Adams Girls' Inter-college, Almora)

A. Why do you want to be serious? Be always cheerful! Swami Vivekananda said, 'To be happy and smiling always takes you nearer to God than anything, any prayer in this world.' Swami Vivekananda himself used to make a lot of fun, cut jokes and laugh after his lectures. The Westerners were surprised at this. While he was in America, a lady once said to him, 'Swami, you ought to be serious, you are a religious preacher!' Swamiji replied humorously, 'Yes, madam, I too become serious when I have stomach ache!' Swamiji later explained that religion does not mean pulling long faces. According to Vedanta we are the children of immortal bliss; so why should we be morose? Of course, that does not mean we should not be sincere in our studies and in our work.

Q. *What are the ways to get peace of mind?* (Ms. Vinita, a student of B.Ed., Kumaon University, Almora)

A. A golden formula for getting peace of mind has been given by the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi: 'If you want peace of mind, do not look at the fault of others. Rather try to see your own faults. None is a stranger, my child, everyone is your own.' By introspection we can find out that most of the time we lose our peace

of mind by criticizing others, by blaming others or by poking our nose in others' affairs unnecessarily. Let us blame ourselves for all our suffering in life, let us purify ourselves, let us try to perfect ourselves for the time being without bothering about others, and we will get peace.

'Not bothering about others' does not mean that we should not feel when others are suffering; it means absence of fault-finding and an eagerness to find means for alleviating the difficulties of others. We should feel for others and try to serve the afflicted, the poor, the sick, the illiterate and the downtrodden. In fact this is one of the important ways of getting peace of mind. When Swami Vivekananda came back to India after his preaching work in America and Europe, a young man once met him in Calcutta and told him that he was not having peace of mind even though he had tried very many methods. On being asked by Swamiji about the method followed by him, the young man replied that someone had advised him to make the mind void at the time of meditation. Accordingly he, the young man, used to sit in meditation shutting the doors of his room and closing his eyes as long as he could, but he could not find peace of mind. Swamiji thereupon replied in a voice full of sympathy, 'My boy, if you take my word, you will first of all have to open the doors of your room and look around instead of closing your eyes. There are hundreds of poor and helpless people in the neighbourhood, then you

* Swami Nikhileswaranandaji is the Editor of *Sri Ramakrishna Jyot*, a Gujarati monthly of the Ramakrishna Order, brought out from Rajkot.

have to serve to the best of your ability. If you want peace of mind, you have to serve others as well as you can.' What Swamiji wanted to convey was that without obtaining purity of mind (*Cittaśuddhi*) through serving others, it was not easy to advance in meditation.

Another important means of getting peace of mind is meditation. In the corporate sector, many companies have introduced regular meditation sessions for the executives for stress management. Many educational institutions in India and abroad are now introducing meditation. Dr. Herbert Benson, Dr. Deepak Chopra, and many others have advocated meditation for mental and physical health through their popular books like *The Relaxation Response*, *The Quantum Healing*, etc. *The Ageless Body and the Timeless Mind*, etc. are based on scientific research.

Q. *How should we meditate?* (Ms. Bimala Davngi, a student of B.T.C., Kumaon University, Almora)

A. There are many techniques of meditation: Viapsyana, Pasyana, Zen meditation, transcendental meditation, Vedantic meditation, etc. You may adopt the method as per your choice. It is important that you learn the technique of meditation personally from a competent teacher. For those of you, who have not yet got such teachers, I may suggest a simple method of meditation. First select the place of meditation. It may be a temple or a clean corner of your house. Sit down in any comfortable posture, only see that the backbone is held straight. Close your eyes and first pray for the welfare of the whole world. Then try to visualize the figure of any holy personality dear to you like Bhagawan Buddha, Lord Jesus Christ, or Sri Ramakrishna in the centre of your heart. If you so like, you may see the photo of this holy personality with your eyes open for some

time before closing your eyes. Try to practise in this way regularly for ten to fifteen minutes twice a day, preferably early in the morning and in the evening. You will get tranquillity of mind and your power of concentration will also increase.

Q. *Is it not selfish to meditate? What good does it do to the world?* (Ms. Yashodhara Joshi, a student of Government Girls' Inter College, Almora)

A. You are talking like Sri Ramakrishna! When Narendranath expressed his desire that he wanted to remain immersed in deep meditation like Shukadeva, Sri Ramakrishna admonished him for seeking his own personal salvation and the bliss of meditation remaining oblivious of the sufferings of millions of human beings. He advised him to sacrifice even his desire for salvation and serve the suffering humanity in the spirit of worship, looking upon every human being as the manifestation of the Divine. Sri Ramakrishna reminded Narendranath that there is a stage higher than that of samadhi in which one realizes that the whole world is the manifestation of the Divine, as beautifully expressed in a song by the Sufi poet Zafar:

*Tujhse hamne dil ko lagāyā,
jo kuch hai so tū hī hai;
Ek tujhko apnā pāyā,
jo kuch hai so tū hī hai.*

*O Lord, we have given our heart to You,
who are present everywhere; the only Beloved
we have found is You, who are present every-
where.*

This was a favourite song of Narendranath.

But it is not easy to bring the idea of worship while performing our work. That is why it should be backed by a little meditation, at least twice a day. Many people go about doing good to others, but there is more of 'propaganda, giving about' than 'doing good'. Persons who meditate well do more good to society

than those who claim to be doing good to others through philanthropic works while hiding their real motive of satisfying their ego, their desire for publicity. Those who meditate well create powerful spiritual vibrations which transform the lives of many; their very presence is a blessing to many.

So we should neither condemn those holy persons who are engrossed in exclusive meditation, nor those who are serving others without any selfish motive, in a spirit of worship. These are the two ways of communing with the Divine, within and without. However, for most of us, a harmonious blending of work and meditation in our daily routine is commendable.

Q. *What should we do when we are terribly depressed?* (Ms. Lata Mishra, a student of Adams Girls' Inter College, Almora)

A. Under such a state of mind you should immediately approach a person for whom you have a lot of respect and love, and unburden your heart by telling him your innermost feelings and problems. In many cases it is seen that just by unburdening the heart, half the problem gets solved. If there is no such person available, you may intensely pray to the Divine who is present in the heart of all beings. Fill your mind with positive thoughts. Sometimes reading some inspiring books also works like a miracle. I will cite some examples in this regard.

A young man (Sri Anna Hazare) was terribly depressed. In the war between India and Pakistan, all his colleagues had died when the jeep he was driving was bombarded by Pakistani planes. Sitting at night at the Delhi railway station, he

was thinking of committing suicide by jumping under a train in motion because he found no meaning in life. Somehow he survived that night. Next morning, when he went to fetch a newspaper, he accidentally came across a book of Swami Vivekananda. By reading only a few sentences he got a new inspiration to live. He found meaning in life, a purpose in living: to love others, to serve others. He took retirement from the Army, went back to his village (Ralegoen Siddhi in Maharashtra) and started many service activities under very odd circumstances. Gradually, the village got transformed. Impressed by his miraculous achievements, he has been given the responsibility of developing 300 villages of Maharashtra!

A Major of NCC was in a terribly depressed state of mind, so much so he repeatedly told, 'I will shoot myself'. Perhaps he suffered from an unhappy married life. His Senior Officer, a Colonel of NCC, reported this to a monk of the Ramakrishna Order in Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), who advised him to present a copy of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* to his troubled junior officer and to convey the message that after reading that book he may do whatever he likes. A few months later, the Colonel reported to the monk that the *Gospel* had saved the life of his junior. After going through the book his junior told him, 'For the whole world, I am not going to commit the colossal sin of suicide.'

Thus many persons have overcome their depressed state of mind by positive thinking, by reading inspiring books.

(to be continued)

If you tap the source of your being, you can untrap yourself from the bond of your birth.

—Dr. P. Dhanavel, Agartala

News and Reports

CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION AND SWAMIJI'S RETURN TO INDIA

The following centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission celebrated the two centenaries: **Bangalore**: quiz and elocution competitions on 24 January; **Bhubaneswar**: two public meetings and a spiritual retreat from 30 January to 1 February; **Chennai Mission Ashrama**: competitions in recitation, elocution, essay-writing and quiz from 5 to 12 January; **Chennai Students' Home**: recitation competitions and released a souvenir to mark the occasion; **Deoghar**: a youth rally on 23 January; **Jaipur**: a function — public meetings, religious discourses, a spiritual retreat and prize distribution — from 14 to 17 February; **Khetri**: distributed 100 sweaters to school children; **Limbdi**: a public meeting; **Mangalore**: seminars, essay-competitions, retreats and speeches at the local university, schools and colleges; **Mysore**: discourses and music programmes from 2 to 9 January; **Nagpur**: youth convention on 16 January, seminar on 17 and 18 January, public meetings on 16 and 18 January; **Pune Math**: lectures, public meetings, spiritual retreats and a youth convention in Pune, Nasik, Alibag, Ahmednagar, Beed and Aurangabad; **Puri Mission Ashrama**: public meetings from 13 to 18 January; **Ranchi Morabadi Ashrama**: youth convention-cum-national integration camp on 10 and 11 January, competitions in elocution, recitation, essay-writing and quiz from 14 to 18 January, a panel discussion on 'Swami Vivekananda and the present crisis of our country' on 20 January; **San Francisco, U.S.A.**: observed with special worship, devotional singing and three talks illustrated with slides on 1 January; **Seva Pratishthan**: gave away prizes to the nursing staff and nursing students who had taken part in the seminar and cultural programme held earlier to commemorate the twin centenaries of Swamiji's Return to India and of the Ramakrishna Mission. Dr. Sushil Mukherjee, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, presided over the function; and **Taki**: exhibition, religious discourses and a drama from 21 to 24 December 1997.

The Central Committee for Ramakrishna Mission Centenary Celebrations held an All-India Youth Convention on 3 and 4 February followed by an All-India Devotees' Convention on 7 and 8 February. The detailed report of the Conventions appeared in *Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1998 issue. A copy of the *Selections from the Com-*

plete Works of Swami Vivekananda and a few other books were given to all the delegates (about 7000) as gift. The **Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan** organized a medical camp at the Belur Math during the Conventions in which a total of 2,581 patients were treated.

Change in Address of Centre

The name 'Mathura Road' in front of our Vrindaban centre has been changed to 'Swami Vivekananda Marg' in Vrindaban area. So, in the address 'Mathura Road' is to be replaced by 'Swami Vivekananda Marg'.

Udbodhan's Entry into its 100th Year

To commemorate the entry of *Udbodhan* (the Bengali Journal of the Ramakrishna Order) into its 100th year, **Udbodhan, Baghbazar**, held a three-day programme at Udbodhan Office from 15 to 17 January 1998. Vice-President Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji, the General Secretary Srimat Swami Smarananandaji and several other distinguished persons addressed the meetings which were attended by a large number of devotees and our monastics.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, has been awarded first prize for its solar energy programme for 1996–1997 and a special prize for its bio-gas programme for the year 1995–1996 by the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources, Government of India.

Magh Mela

The **Puri Math** extended free medical aid and supplied drinking water to the pilgrims at Chandrabhaga (Konark) on 2 and 3 February on the occasion of Magh Saptami Mela; 535 patients were treated. A social health awareness camp and a bookstall were also organized during the period.

The **Allahabad Centre** held a month-long service camp at the Triveni Sangam during the Magh Mela from 11 January to 11 February in which 20,227 patients were treated free of charge. An exhibition on the life of Swami Vivekananda, a bookstall, and religious discourses were also organized.

E-Mail & Web site

The following centres of the Ramakrishna Order have added e-mail facility. The addresses are as follows: **Chennai Math**: srkmath@giasmd01.vsnl.net.in; **Chennai Students' Home**: rkmsHOME@giasmd01.vsnl.net.in; **San Francisco, U.S.A.** sfvedanta@juno.com.□

Reviews and Notices

Arun Shourie and His Christian Critic (with an introduction by Sita Ram Goel); Voice of India, 2/18 Ansari Road, New Delhi 110 002; 1995; pp. 66; price Rs. 20/-.

This book records the proceedings of the debate between Arun Shourie, a well-known scholar-journalist, and Father Augustine Kanjamala, former secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) — the apex body for coordinating the work of Catholic Churches in India. The debate was spurred by Arun Shourie's book *Missionaries in India* and sponsored by Prajna Bharati, a forum for free thinking and discourse with its headquarters at Hyderabad.

Father Kanjamala argued that Shourie's book gave the impression that the Christians posed a threat to the unity and integrity of India. He further alleged that most of the material used by Shourie for the book belonged to 'a bygone age'. Besides, it was aggressive in tone and insular in interpretation.

Father Kanjamala stated that the book has 'a hidden agenda' to malign the missionaries, some of whom like Bede Griffiths, Klaus Klostermaier, Abhishaktananda (a Frenchman who lived like a sannyasi in the Himalayas and was buried in Indore), Father Amaloor, and Father Amalorpavadass made a mark by their scholarship and social activities. He further clarified that there was a radical change in the attitude of Christian missionaries who no more believed that salvation is possible 'only within the Christian churches'. Besides, the old feeling of enmity towards other religions has given way to 'an attitude of empathy and appreciation'. The Christian missionaries of today were concerned more with liberating people from the thralldom of ignorance and superstition than with conversion.

Father Kanjamala affirmed that there was no threat to Indian unity or to Hinduism. 'If Christians are looking forward for separation and secessionist movement why there is no such movement in Kerala?' he asked. Besides, how many people were willing to do social work in Arunachal Pradesh, in the forests of Orissa, or in Adivasi areas? He concluded with the famous prayer of St. Francis of Assisi which speaks of peace, love, harmony, forgiveness, faith and eternal life.

In response, Arun Shourie refuted the allegation that he failed to recognize the positive con-

tribution of Christian missionaries to the cause of social reform. However, he resented the gross misrepresentations of Hinduism by the missionaries. He pointed out the contradiction between the new Christian doctrine saying that salvation is possible through all religions and the continuous urge for conversion. He cited an official publication of the Catholic Church published in 1956 to prove that conversion continued to be the sole aim of Christian missionaries and that there was no change in their perceptions regarding this.

Shourie argued that if, as Kanjamala admits, salvation was possible through any faith, what was the need or justification for conversion? He regretted that the Christian tirade against Hindu gods and goddesses was reprehensible as is evident from a Christian publication of the 1950s which says: 'Rama was not such a person one who could bring solace because, being a sinner, he could not grant peace to his devotees.... Rama, Krishna, Mahadeva, etc. cannot confer salvation as they themselves were encoiled in vices of various kinds. ...all their (Hindu) Gods were great sinners and evil doers.... The dharma of the Hindus is an illusory religion, a religion of superstitions.'

Shourie further contended that while missionaries dubbed Hindu gods as mythical or lecherous, they were too unable to prove the historicity of Jesus Christ; that he was born of a virgin or that he died and rose again. He also pointed out contradictions in the four Gospels. In one version, Jesus is born in Bethlehem; in another, in Nazareth. There are several versions about the date on which he was born. His genealogy is also differently put in Luke and Mark. The same is true of The Last Supper and the Resurrection.

Shourie refuted the fact that the Christians did not recognize castes. 'If there are no dalits among you, if you have abolished caste, why are you asking for reservations?' He took Father Kanjamala to task for his gross ignorance about Hinduism and his blatant attempt to paint Lord Rama as the Lord of the upper castes and Hanuman as the deity of the Harijans. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Shourie argued that the Christians had always disdained social welfare schemes launched by men of other religions. He quoted an instance when the missionaries strongly opposed the opening of a school in a tribal area by Sarvodaya workers. Mahatma Gandhi told a missionary in this respect: 'If you are interested in the emanci-

pation of the tribals, why do you protest if somebody else also goes and opens a school?' The records of Government of India show that when Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru started welfare schemes in Madhya Pradesh, there were bitter protests from missionaries. The social work of RSS among the tribals also came under attack. Reason: 'Because once RSS or the Government machinery comes there, then your main stock-in-trade, saving souls by enrolling them in the church is no longer possible.'

Towards the end Shourie lampooned that part of the Christian prayer in which it is stated: 'Give them through OUR hands their daily bread'. Why only through YOUR hands? he asks. And again: 'By OUR understanding love, give peace and joy'. Why 'through OUR understanding'? The prayer has it: 'Lord make ME a channel of the peace'. Why not, 'Lord, let there be peace'?

There lies the contrast. The Upanishadic prayer says: 'Lead us from darkness to light, from death to immortality,...' obviously 'not through ME'. How could one be in exclusive possession of the Truth?

Shourie's response was followed by a flurry of questions to both the speakers, and these constitute the last part of the book.

Voice of India — publishers deserve to be congratulated for placing before the public the proceedings of a recent inter-religious debate on vital issues. The question, however, is: would it, in any way, change or affect the perceptions of scholars or religionists who are deeply entrenched in their belief systems? It is a hard fact that arguments seldom convince anyone 'contrary to his inclinations'.

Dr. Satish K. Kapoor
Jalandhar

HEALTHY VALUES OF LIVING, Swami Tathagatananda; publ. The Vedanta Society of New York, 34 West 71st Street, New York, N.Y. 10023; 1996; pp. 183; Rs. 40/-.

Revered Swami Tathagatanandaji, the spiritual leader of the Vedanta Society of New York needs very little introduction to the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata*. His earlier books on Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and curiously on Albert Einstein give us the clue that Tathagatanandaji is comprehensive in his concerns. The present volume is in effect an extension of these deep-seated concerns for evolving a viable model for healthy living. As he rightly says, 'In the topic dealt with in this book the image of the

divinity of life has been projected and the unity of thought, in spite of the diversity of subject-matter cannot escape the notice of the perceptive reader'. They thus 'point to a scheme of holistic living as opposed to modern living bereft of spiritual insight'.

Consisting of six sections, the book accordingly sets out to trace the present-day crisis and the need of the hour. Tathagatanandaji sees this need as rooted in acquiring healthy values of life: secular needs to be integrated with the spiritual, an integration abundantly evident in the saviours that India has gifted to mankind. This leads Tathagatanandaji to take a comprehensive look at this new gospel of Vedanta vis-a-vis the western world. He sees the Vedanta movement in USA as offering very healthy correctives to the psychic troubles that the sensate culture poses everywhere challenging the enduring inner values. As Tathagatanandaji rightly says, 'Man's self-fulfilment is not in his physical, intellectual, aesthetic or moral well-being, but in his spiritual enlightenment'. Therefore, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda-Vedanta affirms what American psychologists like William James felt as the balancing dimension of American culture and civilization.

In the last three sections all these ideas are shown as livable and well within the reach of the contemporary seeking consciousness. Tathagatanandaji rightly sees Swami Vivekananda and his apostles as exemplary figures in this regard. It is also interesting that he finds these ideals informing Gandhiji whose concept of *ahimsa* embodies a gospel for the new living. The book concludes with a section significantly called 'Lead Kindly Light' the theme of which is, if one can summarize, the social and educational dimensions of healthy values. I found the chapter on 'Contemporary Social Work in Europe' of absorbing interest. It certainly sheds a new light on this aspect which is rarely studied. The book concludes with a description of Tathagatanandaji's Amarnath Yatra narrated in a racy, gripping way.

Thus *Healthy Values of Living* is an indispensable study highlighting both the crises in values and the remedies for the crises. That this is not Utopian is evident in lives traced here (I read with absorbing interest the chapter on Rolande Genet whose life is a record of noble dedicated service to the Vedanta Society of New York). The book is highly recommended.

Prof. M. Sivaramkrishna
Hyderabad

Bhāṣāsāstrapraveśinī, Professor R.S. Venkatarama Śāstrī; Golden Jubilee Publication, The Kuppuswami Śāstrī Research Institute, 64 Thiru Vi. Ka. Road, Mylapore, Chennai 600 004; 1996; pp. 243; price Rs. 100/-.

The Study on Comparative Philology is highly essential for knowing the origin and development of Indo-European languages in general and Sanskrit in particular. So far books on comparative philosophy were available only in the English language written by some European scholars like T. Burrow, et. al. Those who are Anglo-Sanskrit scholars easily understood such books. However, it was too difficult for Sanskritists or traditional scholars to understand these. Traditional scholars were feeling badly the need of such a book as that under review written in lucid Sanskrit. We, the Sanskritists, should remain grateful to Professor Śāstrī for offering such a beautiful as well as difficult book in Sanskrit language. Not only the Sanskritists but also scholars in other languages like English, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, etc. would be much benefited by going through the history of comparative philology.

In the chapter *Śāstrāranibhasāmarthanam*, the author has introduced the main purpose of the book in which the nature of languages, mutual relation between them and similarities and dissimilarities among them have been discussed with utmost care (p. 1). The languages being different, there is no identity though there is correspondence of shape (*ākārasādrśyam*) which is proved by taking examples from different languages like Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, etc. The author has beautifully pointed out the importance of language. As a great melody is produced through the amalgamation of the limited number of notes, great literary art is produced with the help of limited words (p. 15). This metaphor is used by Bloomfield et. al. which reminds me of a beautiful śloka of the *Śiṣupālavadha* by Māgha: *Varṇaiḥ katipayairiva grathitasya svarairiva/ anantā vāimayasyāha geyasyeva vicitratā//* (2.72).

The author has also shown the relation of linguistics with human culture, sociology, philosophy, natural sciences, etc. (pp. 26–8).

The author has sincerely dealt with various aspects of comparative philology like phonetic laws, various kinds of phonetic changes, semantic changes, law of palatalization, Grimm's law, Verner's law, Hermann Grassmann's law, etc. The discussions on phonology, about, consonants also deserve a separate mention. Four

types of morphology—nominal morphology, pronominal morphology, numeral morphology and verbal morphology—have been highlighted with utmost sincerity. In the concluding part of the book an effort has been made to throw some light on some grammatical concepts like compounds (*samāsa*), cases (*vibhakti*), number (*vacana*), mood, etc.

These topics have been discussed following the line of the European scholars like Aristotle, William Jones, Macdonell, Max Muller, and others. The author has taken pains to point out the basic contribution of European scholars like Schlegel, Rasmus Rask, Jacob Grimm, Franz Bopp, Humboldt, Bredsdorff, and others to the field of comparative philology.

The book would have been a perfect one if the following defects were not there. First, the views of different Indian and Western scholars have been put forth, but no reference is given in the footnotes or endnotes, which might create difficulty for researchers in the field. Secondly, selected Bibliography and Subject Index are expected from any serious research work. Unfortunately, these are not appended to the book.

In spite of these it is a noble attempt to write a book on philology in Sanskrit language and the author is very much successful in this matter. I hope the Sanskritists in general and philologists in particular would be much benefited with this book. To explain the difficult theories in simple Sanskrit is a very difficult task which has been successfully accomplished by the author and hence he deserves our respectful gratitude.

Dr. Raghumath Ghosh
Dt. Darjeeling

A History of Sanskrit Literature, Saṁskṛta Sāhitya Itihāsaḥ; Professor R.S. Venkatarama Sastri; Golden Jubilee Publication, The Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, 84 Thiru Vi. Ka. Road, Chennai 600 004; 1996; pp. 264+viii; Rs. 100/-.

In the 'preface' (which is misspelt preface) the Secretary of the Institute has given a brief introduction to the book which was written and published by the learned author fifty years back. This is the reprint of the earlier book. It is followed by a Sanskrit introduction (*prāstāvikam*) by Professor Venkatarama Śāstrī, which gives an account of the context and situation under which the book was written.

The book opens with the history of Vedic literature in which the time of Vedas, Vedic me-

tres, Vedic deities, Vedic rivers, trees, animals, Upaniṣad, etc. have been discussed and it is clear that we get much light and guidance in going through the entire Vedic literature.

The history of *Purāṇas* opens with a new dimension of the Sanskrit literature as at the outset it gives the characteristic features of *Purāṇas*, viz., *Sargaśca pratisargaśca vaniśo manvantarāṇi ca/ vaniśānucaritañceti purāṇaṁ pañcalakṣaṇam//* (pp. 47–8). After giving a brief introduction, the author deals with the *Rāmāyaṇa* composed by Vālmiki. The author has beautifully conveyed the historical background under which the transition of Vālmiki to a poet took place with the famous śloka: 'Mā niṣāda pratiṣṭhān tvamagamaḥ śāśvatīḥ samāḥ...', which is ultimately an outburst of the pathos (vide, 'Śokaḥ ślokatvamāgataḥ' — *Dhvanyāloka*, ch. 1). It is followed by the history of another big epic, *The Mahābhārata*. In both cases the author has cited the views of various Indian and Western scholars like Wilson, C.V. Vaidya, J.C. Chatterjee, Winternitz, Lassen, et. al. regarding controversial themes like the time of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, the original sources of the stories, etc.

The next part of the book is devoted to the history of *Kāvya* (literary form of art), in which the details about time of the poets and the contents of their creations have been highlighted. It includes Kālidāsa, Vararuci, Aśvaghoṣa, Bhāravi, Bhaṭṭi, Māgha Kṣemendra, Hemachandra, et. al. and their poetic creations. The comparative study in the field of literary criticism on the works of Bhāravi and Māgha is undertaken when it is said, 'Tāvadbhā bhāraverbhāti yāvanmāghasya nodayaḥ/ Udite ca punarmāghe bhāraverbhā raveriva//' (p. 82). *Kāvya* is divided into various types like, *Laghu-kāvya*, *Stotra-kāvya*, *Sandేశakāvya*, *Campūkāvya*, *Citrakāvya*, *Nītikāvya*, *Khaṇḍakāvya*, which receive equal attention in the vast Sanskrit literature.

A separate section is devoted to the discussion of the historical aspect of Sanskrit drama and dramatists. Among these dramatists, Bhāsa is given priority in discussion because his dramas were discovered by T. Ganapati Sastri in Trivandrum in the twentieth century. The dramas of Bhāsa like *Pratijñāyauḡandharyāyaṇam*, *Svapnavāsavadattam*, *Cārudattam*, etc. have occupied a prominent place in history due to their novelty and uniqueness in stories and presentation. In the same way, the works of Bhavabhūti like *Uttara-rāmacaritam*, *Mālatimādhavam*, etc., those of Viśākhadatta like *Mudrārākṣasam*, etc. have been critically evaluated in a very brief manner apart from some theoretical discussion on the characteristic features of Sanskrit drama

as found in the *Alaṅkāra Śāstra* by Viśvanātha, Bhāmaha, Daṇḍī, Vāmana, Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, et. al.

As all have their root in the Veda ('*Sarvam hi vede pratiṣṭhitam bhāratadeśe*', p. 214), our *Śāstras* like *Dharmaśāstra*, *Vyākaraṇaśāstra*, *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika śāstra*, *Pūrvamīmāṃsā*, *Arthaśāstra*, etc. are stated to agree to what is said in the Vedas. In this connection we get some additional information regarding the time of the *R̥g-Veda*, *Sāma-Veda*, *Upaniṣads*, etc.

It is a very difficult work to give a brief account of the whole Sanskrit literature, which the author has successfully accomplished. The history of Sanskrit literature in English by various Western scholars is available. But such a history in Sanskrit is very rare. The Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute has done a pious work in reprinting this valuable book.

The author has taken the help of English editions of Sanskrit history of literature in compiling this edition in simple Sanskrit. He has respectfully referred to the Western scholars like Weber, Lassen, Jacobe, Wilson, Winternitz, and others, which is very praise-worthy. I believe this book is inevitable for a deep understanding of the subject by traditional scholars.

The book would have been more perfect, if chapters were numbered. The chapter delineation has been made systematically but without giving numbers. Hence, it has become very difficult to locate the exact topic in the whole book. Secondly, there should have been an index at the end of the book, which would have helped a scholar immensely in his research work.

In spite of these, the book shall, I believe, remain an asset in the field of Sanskrit and Indological studies in future.

Dr. Raghunath Ghosh

Pālaṇḍumaṇḍana Prahasana Of Harijīvana Miśra; Dr. V. Raghavan; Golden Jubilee Publication, The Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, 84 Thiru Vi. Ka. Road, Chennai 600 004; 1996; pp. 69+x; Rs. 70/-, \$ 5.

It is a very difficult task to make others laugh, which has been successfully accomplished through the initiative of the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Chennai. Among their various books on different aspects of Indology, *Pālaṇḍumaṇḍana Prahasana of Harijīvana Miśra* is one which is brought out 'to mark the Valedictory function of its Golden Jubilee on the 10th July, 1996' (preface). In the Valedictory session

when human minds become heavy with the pang of separation from each other, this *prahasana* (satire) makes them replace their sense of sorrow or melancholy with laughter and fun.

This book is broadly divided into three parts: Preface, Critical Introduction on Harijivana Miśra and his plays by Dr. George T. Artola and Dr. V. Raghavan, and the text entitled '*Pālaṇḍu-maṇḍana Prahasana* critically edited by Dr. V. Raghavan with its English translation and notes by Dr. S.S. Janaki.

In the Preface, Dr. S.S. Janaki has given a history of comedy-farce (*prahasana*) in Sanskrit literature and located the place and contribution of Harijivana Miśra. Among the six *prahasanas*, the present one is the master-piece. Until sixties, these *prahasanas* of Sri Mishra were not known to the scholars in the field as they were in manuscript form in the Anup Sanskrit Library, Bikaner, and in Indian Office Library, London. The credit goes to Dr. George Artola of the University of Hawaii, U.S.A., for undertaking the project of studying the unpublished *prahasanas* which include the present one also. The edited version of this *prahasana* was successfully staged on 12 May 1966 at Madras, which is evidenced through the incorporation of a couple of photographs to this edition.

The second part of the book comprises of the critical introduction on Harijivana Miśra and his plays by Dr. George T. Artola and Dr. V. Raghavan. First, Dr. Artola gives a historical account of writing the first *prahasana* called *Adbhūtatarāṅga*, which is followed by its main story. Further, the author has given a critical appreciation of other *prahasanas* like *Prāsaṅgika*, *Pālaṇḍumaṇḍana* and *Vibudhamohana*. Dr. Raghavan has concentrated on the *Salīdayānanda* of Harijivana Miśra because the author of this *prahasana* takes up a literary theme and turns it into a short play, which is done in a very scholarly and interesting fashion. In this *prahasana*, the description of *Nāyikā* as *Brahmānandajanani* (i.e. the producer of the bliss of Brahman), is very significant as it refers to *rasavyajñānā* through *Śleṣa*. In this view, he has chosen the names of other characters as *Abhidhā*, *Lakṣaṇā*, etc. and the *Vyāñjanā* described by the author is *parakīyā*. These names have been deliberately given keeping in view the functions of each of them to give the audience an idea about the literary excellence.

The concluding part of the book deals with the text *Pālaṇḍumaṇḍana prahasana* critically edited by Dr. V. Raghavan. The English translation along with notes, given by Dr. Janaki, will help the non-Sanskrit scholars enjoy the taste of the *prahasana* through its translation.

It is a comedy-farce on the eating habits of brahmins from different regions of India. Many brahmins from all over India assemble in the house of Liṅgoji Bhaṭṭa on the occasion of *garbhādhāna* ceremony of his wife Ciñca. Laśuna Panta who was taking part in discussion with the women about dowries and money settlements has a gastro-intestinal attack. A variety of medicines made of herbs and vegetable roots, none of which have any room in a religious ceremony, is suggested. The old man recovered when a Bengali brahmin Bhattacharya arrived. This Bengali brahmin cannot tolerate the smell of onion, while the south Indian brahmin cannot tolerate the smell of rotten fish. There was a heated exchange of words between them. Bhattacharya claimed that fish is not prohibited in the *Śāstras*. The south Indian brahmins refute this argument by saying that it is permissible in other yugas but not in the Kaliyuga. During this turmoil, a south Indian brahmin calls in the police who is convinced that the Bhattacharya was wrong. The comedy ends with the arrest of the Bengali, postponement of *garbhādhāna* and the departure of the guests.

The subject-matter of the *prahasana* is very modern and it creates much fun centering the eating preferences of the brahmins, choice of women, etc. The author has taken great pains in arranging all these incidents in a very systematic manner. The statements like '*pālaṇḍulaśunagandhena svargīkṛto'yaṁ lokaḥ*', '*Tuṣyatu durjanā iti nyāyena*, *Pūrvam tasyaiva nirmūlatvaṁ, tatrāpi mat-syaṇīśedhaḥ kvāsti*,' etc. are full of humour and wit, which is the main intention of the author. Those who are mentally exhausted after going through books of a serious nature are advised to receive some fresh air by enjoying these satires.

Dr. Raghunath Ghosh

Bhagavad Gita: A Literary Elucidation, Madhusudan Pati; Publ. Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., 35-C Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya Marg, Popular Press Building, Tardeo, Mumbai 400 034; 1997; pp. 210 + x; price Rs. 365/-.

There have been many thematic expositions of the Bhagavad Gita by literary scholars. Commentaries on commentaries have been written by ardent disciples. Madhusudan Pati's book attempts to give a literary elucidation of this great philosophical treatise.

In this book Pati tries to '...relate the poetry to the philosophy, the textual and structural designs, putting due emphasis on the dramatic

management of interacting moods and impulses of the four characters...' (p. v). The Bhagavad Gita, a part of the *Mahabharata*, enunciates certain perennial philosophical truths. It can be interpreted in the nature of an allegory where Arjuna in the poem is every man, and Krishna '...a universal soul operating within the orbit of spatio-temporal particularities, ...functioning ... both as man and God, friend and preceptor, political leader and Upanishadic visionary' (p. 1). The Gita exemplifies a unique situation in the dramatic structure of the *Mahabharata*. It centres around the internal conflict of a tormented soul who is spiritually unable to define and understand the concept of duty and *dharma*. It has immense dramatic appeal, and the resolution of the soul's crisis is marked by a variety of human emotions and feelings.

The book begins with an Introduction where the author humbly apologizes '...for all the blem-

ishes of comprehension and composition in the book for the irritation they might cause the perceptive minds' (!) (p. vii). The subsequent chapters deal with the elucidation of the various cantos of the Gita ranging from Canto 1 to 18. Each chapter deals with the exposition of a particular canto.

The thematic and dramatic structure of the cantos has been analysed in a lucid and coherent manner. Though the exposition is meticulous and comprehensive, a *critical* evaluation from a *literary* perspective would have enhanced the poetic richness of the interpretation. The language used is simple and unpretentious. For those who yearn to understand the Gita in all its simplicity, Madhusudan Pati's book is an invaluable ally.

Dr. Rama Nair
Secunderabad

Ramakrishna Math and the Youth

(Continued from page 459)

talks.

Gopi: Really it is very inspiring, Maharaj, that the Hyderabad Math is organizing such activities.

Swami: Not only the Hyderabad Math, Gopi, many of our centres are engaged in such activities. Our work is amongst the youth and the downtrodden. If they are awakened, there certainly is a great future for our country. For that purpose, our youth should read and derive inspiration from the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, which alone can provide the necessary inspiration and proper leadership qualities.

Let me quote a saying from Swami Vivekananda: 'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself.' This is the goal and purpose of all our activities amongst the youth.

Gopi: Thank you, Maharaj. It was indeed fruitful talking to you and knowing the edifying message and inspiring work of the Ramakrishna Math. I think this message

should spread far and wide, so that more and more of the younger generation may draw inspiration from it and grow to become responsible citizens with a positive attitude towards life. How great indeed is the nation held by all those who, becoming connected with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement, have dedicated their lives for such a noble cause!

*Sarve bhavantu sukhinah
Sarve santu nirāmayāḥ;
Sarve bhadraṇi paśyantū
Mā kaścid-duḥkhabhāg-bhavet.*

The whole gist of Jnana-Yoga is to show humanity the method of undoing this Karma (our whole lives are made up by our habits and thoughts).

—Swami Vivekananda